SHAKESPEARE

HAMLET

PRINCE OF DENMARK

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

K. DEIGHTON

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INTRODUCTION.

Text and date of the Play.

THOUGH some fourteen or sixteen years before the date of the first edition of *Hamlet* known to us, there are allusions in contemporary literature to a play apparently bearing the same title and containing the same plot, the weight of authority seems against Shakespeare's having had any hand in it. The quarto of 1603 is the first certain date of the publication of Shakespeare's play, and in this edition we have but a meagre draft of what in the following year appeared in much the same shape as it now bears. Opinions are greatly divided as to whether the first quarto was an imperfect version of the play as originally written and afterwards largely re-cast; or whether it represents a mangled and piratical version of the play taken down in shorthand while being acted, or surreptitiously printed from an imperfect manuscript of the prompt books. The former supposition is ably maintained by Knight, with whom Delius, Eltze, Staunton, Dyce, and Gervinus agree in the main. Of the latter supposition the strongest supporters are Collier, Mommsen, and Grant White. The points on which Knight and those in agreement with him especially insist, are briefly these: That, while all the action of the play as we now have it, is to be found in the first sketch, the

amended version differs too widely from the original one to be due to mere mutilation or imperfect transcription, that difference being conspicuous in the careful working up of the first idea of the play; in the studied alterations of diction; in the elaboration of thought; the maturity of the philosophic spirit and contemplative part of Hamlet's nature; the modification of Hamlet's frenzy; the uncertainty in which we are left as to the Queen's privity to the murder of her husband; the transposition and omission of scenes; and the change of names in certain of the characters. Collier, and his followers, hold that the greater part of the play as found in the first quarto was taken down in shorthand; that where mechanical skill failed the shorthand writer, he either filled up the blanks badly from memory, or employed an inferior writer to assist him; that although some of the scenes were carelessly transposed, and others entirely omitted, the drama, as it was acted while the shorthand writer was employed in taking it down, was in all its main features the same as the more perfect copy printed in 1604. To me, Knight's arguments seem unanswerable. As to the date at which the play was originally written we have nothing but conjectures, and these vary from 1597 to 1602, the latter being the more probable date.

Source of the plot.

The more remote source of the plot is Saxo Grammaticus, from whom Belleforest, a French writer, derived the story to be found in his *Histoires Tragiques*, 1570, which, under the title of *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, [illegible] later on translated into English. Whether Shakespea[re] used the original or its translation, or took the plot fro[m] an earlier play on the same subject is doubtful; bu[t] Elze has put forward arguments which make it seem

probable that the translation was subsequent to the earlier play, whoever its author.

Outline of the Play.

In front of the Castle of Elsinore, the residence of the Danish Court, the guard is being relieved at midnight. With the relieving officers comes Horatio, a friend of Prince Hamlet, to ascertain whether there is any truth in a rumour that has reached his ears of a Ghost having appeared to the sentinel on two previous occasions. Horatio, a man of philosophical and sceptical character, disbelieves the story, and is in conversation on the subject with the two officers, when suddenly a figure resembling the dead king is seen confronting them. Horatio questions the apparition, which, however, without giving any answer, stalks away; and now convinced by the evidence of his own eyes that the Ghost is no illusion, Horatio predicts that its coming bodes some evil about to fall upon the state. A conversation follows, in which the three friends discuss the warlike preparations that have of late been going on so vigorously throughout Denmark, when suddenly the Ghost appears for the second time. Again Horatio questions it without result, and at the sound of cock-crow it slowly fades from sight. Horatio advises that Hamlet be told of the apparition, and the watch being over, he and his companions separate. With the second Scene we come to a room of state in the Castle wherein are assembled the g and queen attended by Hamlet, Polonius, the lord- erlain, his son, Laertes, and others. The king re- how by the death of his brother he has succeeded e throne and, with the concurrence of his ministers, n his brother's widow to wife; how he has of late en making preparations to resist the threatened in-

vasion of Fortinbras, prince of Norway, and is now about to send an embassy to the king of that country to remonstrate on the subject. At this point he turns to Laertes, who, he hears, has some request to make to him. Laertes wishes to return to Paris to complete his education, and permission being granted to him, the king and queen reason with Hamlet upon the continued and excessive grief he has shown for his father's death, and entreat him to give up his project of returning to the University of Wittemberg. Hamlet assents, and when left alone pours forth in soliloquy his contempt for the king and his horror at his mother's marriage with one so unworthy of her love. While he is thus engaged, Horatio with Marcellus and Bernardo enter to relate the circumstances of the apparition. Convinced by their description that the Ghost must be that of his father, Hamlet arranges to watch with them the next night in order to discover the meaning of the mystery. This Scene is followed by one in which Laertes, about to embark for Paris, takes the opportunity of cautioning his sister, Ophelia, not to place too much faith in the proffers of love which Hamlet has made to her. To them enters Polonius, their father, who sententiously counsels Laertes as to his behaviour and manner of life in Paris. On the departure of his son, Polonius turns to his daughter, questions her as to Hamlet's attentions, and enjoins her for the future to give him less encouragement. The fourth Scene is again at midnight on the platform before the Castle, Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus being there in expectation of the Ghost's appearance. While they are in conversation upon the drunken festivities of the Court, the Ghost appears; Hamlet

addresses it, and by every form of entreaty urges it to state the reason of its coming. The Ghost beckons Hamlet away, and, in spite of his friends' remonstrance, he follows. When at some distance from Horatio and Marcellus, the Ghost explains that though it had been given out that he had died of a sudden disease, he had in reality been poisoned by his brother while asleep in his orchard, that brother having secretly won away the affections of his queen. His appearance on earth is to urge his son to vengeance, which Hamlet undertaking, the Ghost disappears. On Hamlet's rejoining them, Horatio and Marcellus question him as to what has happened. At first he plays with them, putting off their questions, but afterwards, without relating to them what the Ghost had told him, calls upon them to swear that they will not reveal to any one what they had witnessed. As he is administering the oath, the voice of the Ghost is heard beneath the ground enforcing obedience to obey Hamlet's injunction. The oath being taken, Hamlet confides to his companions that it may be necessary to him "to put an antic disposition on," and conjures them, however strangely he may bear himself, never to allow the slightest hint to escape them as to his intention, the Ghost from beneath again calling upon them to take the oath.

At the opening of the second Act, between which and the first some weeks have elapsed, Polonius is despatching his servant, Reynaldo, to Laertes in Paris, and enjoining upon him to find out what manner of life Laertes is there leading. Reynaldo has hardly left when Ophelia entering relates how Hamlet in wild attire and distracted mood has paid her a visit which has terribly

alarmed her. Polonius, attributing his behaviour to the frenzy of love, determines to acquaint the king with the matter. Meanwhile we have a scene in which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two of Hamlet's youthful companions, are introduced. They have been sent for by the king in the hopes that they might elicit from Hamlet the cause of his sudden transformation, and for this they engage to use their best efforts. As they leave the presence, Polonius enters to report the return of the ambassadors sent to Norway; and further to announce that he has discovered the secret of Hamlet's wild behaviour. The ambassadors having received their interview, Polonius proceeds to expound with pompous prolixity his discovery that Hamlet has been driven out of his senses by his love for Ophelia. The king, whose guilty conscience suggests that something else than love is at the bottom of the matter, wishes to probe it further; and at the suggestion of Polonius agrees to hide himself where he may overhear a conversation between Ophelia and Hamlet, who for that purpose are to be brought together. Hamlet now enters, and in a talk with the foolish old chamberlain skilfully strengthens the impression that he is not in his right mind. Polonius is followed by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Their efforts to sound Hamlet are as futile as those of Polonius. Hamlet in fact completely turns the tables upon them, shows them that he has divined the object of their visit, and by a mixture of keen questioning, easy satire, pretended confidence as to his condition, and an occasional show of unsoundness of intellect, sends them away utterly baffled and conscious of being outwitted. To Hamlet the one point of importance in the conversa-

tion is the information given him that a company of players has arrived at Elsinore, and that some dramatic entertainment may be expected. Hamlet at once conceives the idea of turning their presence to account by arranging that they shall play a piece into which may be introduced circumstances closely resembling those of his father's murder. To this the players assent, and the Act closes with a soliloquy in which Hamlet reproaches himself for having so long delayed his measures of vengeance.

An account by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of their interview with Hamlet opens the third Act. This is followed by the meeting of Ophelia and Hamlet already planned, in which the latter again assumes the guise of distraction, though the king, who overhears the conversation, doubts the reality of the seeming madness and suspects some dangerous design. He therefore comes to the decision to get rid of Hamlet by sending him off to England, where he intends to have him put to death. The next Scene brings in the court-play, and this so closely reproduces the details of the murder that the king in his alarm suddenly leaves the hall, now fully aware that by Hamlet at all events his guilt has been detected. Shortly afterwards in a private interview with his mother, Hamlet, throwing off his disguise, bitterly reproaches her with her guilt, wrings from her a promise of repentance, and a further promise that she will not reveal to the king his simulation of madness. Polonius, who, in order to overhear the conversation and report it to the king, had hidden himself behind the arras, on hearing the queen cry for help echoes her cries; whereupon Hamlet, drawing his rapier, makes a pass through the hangings and kills the old man on the spot.

At the opening of the fourth Act, the queen reports to the king the death of Polonius, but, faithful to her promise, pretends that Hamlet did the deed in a fit of madness. Hamlet is sent for by the king, who, under the guise of anxiety for his safety, tells him that to avoid the consequences of his act he must at once leave Denmark. Hamlet's departure for England is followed by intelligence of Ophelia's having lost her senses in consequence of her father's death, and by the return of Laertes to demand vengeance for the murder. His wrath, at first directed against the king, is soon diverted against Hamlet, the king showing him that he himself was equally an object of Hamlet's ill-will. While they are in consultation, a letter is brought from Hamlet announcing his having been captured by pirates and put naked upon the shores of Denmark. A plot for his murder is then devised between the king and Laertes. Hamlet is to be persuaded to engage in a fencing match with the latter, who, during a pause in the combat, is to manage to take up a foil that has no button at its point, and with it to run Hamlet through the body. To make things more certain, Laertes arranges to poison the point of this foil, while the king on his part promises to have ready a cup of poisoned wine of which Hamlet between the heats is to be induced to drink. Just as their compact is concluded, news comes of Ophelia's having in her madness accidentally drowned herself. Her funeral shortly follows, and at it a violent altercation takes place between Laertes and Hamlet, who has just made his way back to Elsinore. They are, however, so far pacified that on the morrow Hamlet accepts Laertes's challenge to a fencing match At this match Laertes manages to wound Hamlet with

the poisoned rapier; but in a scuffle they exchange weapons, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. While the combat is proceeding, the queen, who knows nothing of the wine being poisoned, drinks some of it and falls dead; Laertes knowing that his wound is fatal, confesses to Hamlet the treachery of which he and the king have been guilty, whereupon Hamlet rushes upon the latter and stabs him to death. Laertes and Hamlet almost immediately succumb to the poison in their wounds, and the play ends with the election to the throne of Fortinbras, who has just arrived on the scene.

The question of Hamlet's sanity.

On this question there are four different hypotheses: (1) That Hamlet was throughout perfectly sane, but feigned insanity; (2) that Hamlet was after his interview with the Ghost more or less insane; (3) that in Hamlet insanity was latent, but was only fully developed after the Court-play; (4) that Hamlet was neither insane, nor feigned to be so. From the outline already given it will be seen that the first of these hypotheses is assumed. But before stating reasons in support of this assumption, it will be convenient to consider the views of those who hold that Hamlet was more or less insane from the time at which the Ghost appeared to him. On this point the experts, the "mad-doctors", as they are sometimes called, are tolerably unanimous. Thus Dr Ray asserts that "the integrity of every train of reason is marred by some intrusion of disease; the smooth, deep current of his feelings is turned into eddies and whirlpools under its influence, and his most solemn undertakings conducted to an abortive issue" ... that "in all Hamlet's interviews with Polonius the style of his dis-

course is indicative of the utmost contempt for the old courtier, and he exhibits it in a manner quite characteristic of the insane ... Nothing is more so than a fondness of annoying those whom they dislike by ridicule, raillery, satire, vulgarity, and every other species of shame"... Dr. Ray goes on to note Hamlet's "bad dreams" as one of the symptoms of impending insanity; his behaviour to Ophelia he says "discloses an interesting feature in mental pathology,—the change which insanity brings over the warmest affections of the heart, whereby the golden chain wrought by love and kindness are utterly dissolved, and the forsaken and desolate spirit, though it continues among men, is no longer of them"... Dr. Bucknill notes in regard to the same matter that Hamlet's conduct here "is a mixture of feigned madness, of the selfishness of passion blasted by the cursed blight of fate, of harshness which he assumes to protect himself from an affection which he feels hostile to the present purpose of his life, and of that degree of real unsoundness, his unfeigned 'weakness and melancholy,' which is the subsoil of his mind" ... Further he draws attention to Hamlet's confession of melancholy, another peculiarity of the melancholiac ... to the vehemence inconsistent with a sound mind which Hamlet betrays after killing Polonius; he asserts that the tests of his sanity which he offers to his mother are not in the least inconsistent with madness; and concludes that though a reasoning melancholiac, he is not a veritable lunatic. Dr. Conolly adverts, among other things, to Hamlet's exhortations to secrecy as among the symptoms of madness recognisable as such by all physicians intimately acquainted with the beginnings of

insanity; to the flightiness and cynical disdain by which on almost all occasions his conversation is marred; to the gradual progress of the disease as described by Polonius; to his conversations with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern exhibiting the acuteness which an insane man will for a short time display; to his extravagance of behaviour at Ophelia's funeral, etc., etc. Dr. Kellogg notices Hamlet's restlessness, imperfect sleep, bad dreams; the successive steps in the progress of his disease; Ophelia's conviction of his madness, in which she would not be likely to be deceived; the readiness with which the genuine manifestations burst forth upon occasions of unusual excitement, etc., etc. Now I am not of course going to set my ignorance against the profound knowledge of these experts; nor would it be fair, if I contemplated any such hardihood, to give only such scanty abridgments of what has already been abridged by Furness. I readily accept all the statements set out as to the symptoms of madness; and yet I deny the conclusion at which the experts have arrived. Hamlet's declared intention of assuming "an antic disposition," his assurance to his mother that he is only "mad in craft," the test he proposes in proof of his assertion, may all be conceded as valueless in determining the question. But the fact that Shakespeare has deceived even the elect into a belief of Hamlet's madness is nothing more than the very highest testimony to his consummate art. If he could acquire a knowledge so intimate, so accurate, so profound, of madness in its various phases, what is there to hinder his endowing one of his characters with the power of assuming those phases?

"If a dramatist," observes Cardinal Wiseman,* "wished to represent one of his persons as feigning madness, that assumed condition would be naturally desired by the writer to be as like as possible to the real affliction. If the other persons associated with him could at once discover that the madness was put on, of course the entire action would be marred, and the object for which the pretended madness would be designed would be defeated by the discovery." But the proof, to my mind, that Hamlet was merely feigning madness lies in the fact of his entire consistency of action in regard to that disguise from the moment in which he conceived the idea of assuming it. To show this consistency, it will be necessary to follow his behaviour step by step. The first show of eccentricity, then, is immediately after the revelation made to him by the Ghost,† and this is closely followed by the warning to Horatio and Marcellus that he may hereafter find it expedient "to put an antic disposition on." Why he should at first have behaved towards Horatio and Marcellus in a mysterious manner, I shall endeavour to explain when I come to the last of the four hypotheses mentioned. It is upon Polonius that we first see the effect of Hamlet's experiment in acting the madman; an experiment producing exactly the desired impression, viz., that intense love for Ophelia is at the bottom of the sudden transformation. Hamlet knows well enough that a father's vanity will be tickled by the belief that his daughter is loved to such distraction by one so much above her in station, and that the garrulous old courtier will not only at once carry the

* *William Shakespeare*, 1865, p. 41. † See additional note, p. xxxi.

news to the king, but will do his best to instil into him the same faith. No more crafty design could have been conceived for hoodwinking Polonius, and through him the king by whom he was held in so high esteem for his penetration. The next manifestation we have of Hamlet's insanity is in his conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Their sudden return to Elsinore strikes Hamlet as something strange, and he quickly guesses that the king is at the bottom of it. With them, however, it is necessary for him to play a somewhat different rôle. His first object is to ascertain whether they have been set as spies upon him, and without much difficulty he turns them completely inside out, while the apparently irrelevant observations he makes from time to time, together with the confidence he pretends to repose in them as to his state of mind,—a confidence which would seem natural towards the companions of his boyhood,—impresses them with the idea of his insanity none the less firmly that he deprecates such an idea by declaring that he is "but mad north-north-west." Upon the entrance of Polonius and the players, Hamlet keeps up a sufficient show of insanity to deceive the old man, though at the same time behaving rationally enough to make his wishes known to the players regarding the piece he has determined to have performed. That the strain upon him has been great in keeping up appearances is plain enough from the relief he expresses when left alone, and the soliloquy which follows betrays nothing of incoherence or mental derangement. His want of resolution to act immediately is indeed manifest, but it is as manifest to himself as to us. We next see him just before his

interview with Ophelia, and to his despairing monologue then no one has ever imputed the smallest taint of diseased intellect, though it has been argued that a madman in a lucid interval might reason with equal force and clearness. Ophelia's entry cuts short his reflections, and Hamlet has now doubly to be on his guard. He no doubt suspects that Ophelia, like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, has been sent to probe his malady. He probably further suspects that he is being secretly watched, and he can be quite certain that his words and actions will be reported to Polonius, that is, to the king. But over and above all this his feelings towards Ophelia place him in a perilous position. Against the fond dictates of a love which bid him take her to his heart, he has to wage a terrible struggle. One moment's lapse into tenderness will undo everything. To give her the slightest opportunity of exercising her magic influence will be to sacrifice his oath to the spirit of his father. Short, sharp, questions to herself, bitter invectives against the fickleness of her sex, mingled with cynical accusations of himself and his sex, alone will serve his turn; and if it is urged that his stern resolve passes into cruelty, it may be answered that beneath the ice of seeming heartlessness are raging the fierce fires of well-nigh overpowering love. For awhile after this torturing scene Hamlet has no need to assume his disguise. For we next find him with the players, to whom he is giving directions as to the manner of their acting. With them it matters nothing that he should appear in his sound senses; they are not likely to have either the opportunity or the wish to betray him. In his instruc-

tions to them, therefore, there is no admixture of "wild and whirling words"; nothing in fact that is not eminently judicious and to the point. So, too, when Horatio joins him, his intellect is as calm and clear, his reasoning as sound, the expression of his feelings as sober, and the plan of action he announces as practical, as the most exacting judge could desire. Contrast his demeanour then with the instantaneous change upon the entry of the king; contrast it with his behaviour to Polonius while the play is preparing, and to Ophelia during the action of the play; note his irrepressible exultation, when alone with Horatio, at the success of his stratagem, and again the immediate resumption of his "antic disposition" upon the re-entry of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Passing over his reflections when watching the king at prayer with the remark that passionate as they are, they betray nothing of an impaired intellect, we come to the interview to which his mother has summoned him. And here, if his reproaches are vehement, if his taunts are armed with the fiercest stings, there is nothing in them which a sense of terrible wrong to himself and deep disgrace to her might not prompt. Throwing off his disguise, he plainly declares that his seeming madness is but craft. Such a declaration I have already admitted is in itself no absolute proof; yet, as Stearns * observes, Hamlet had special reasons for disabusing his mother of her belief in his insanity. Such a belief would act as a "flattering unction" to her soul, and thus frustrate his purpose of driving home to her conscience that recognition of her guilt which it is his aim to awaken. Instead, then, of waiting

* *The Shakespeare Treasury of Wit and Knowledge*, 1871, p. 352.

to learn his mother's object in sending for him, Hamlet plunges at once into the lesson he intends to read her; and when she, frightened at his manner of address, would put an end to the interview he tells her "You go not till I set you up a glass Where you may see the inmost part of you." Fearing that he is about to murder her, the queen shrieks for help, and when her words are echoed by Polonius behind the arras, Hamlet drawing his rapier makes a pass through the hangings and kills the intrusive courtier. For the moment, anger at the trick sought to be put upon him evokes nothing but contempt for his victim, though later on contrition succeeds to his passionate outburst. Turning from the dead body, he reproaches his mother with having blurred the grace of all womanly modesty, with having made marriage vows a hideous mockery, and religion a mere rhapsody of words. Then comparing his father and his uncle, he dwells on the noble nature of the one, and the vileness of the other; anticipates any excuses she might make by telling her that at her time of life a plea of having been carried away by love would be an absurdity, and that if passion dominated her it was all the more shameful in a matron. His words at length penetrate to her soul, and she confesses her guilt. Hamlet, not yet satisfied, is enforcing his lesson when suddenly the Ghost appears, and while rebuking him for his delay in taking vengeance upon the king, enjoins greater tenderness to the queen. The colloquy with the Ghost, who to the queen is invisible, leads her to imagine that her son is subject to some hallucination. Hamlet quickly dispels this idea and, though in less vehement language, eloquently calls upon her to manifest contrition by her change of life,

and exacts a solemn promise that she will not reveal to the king what had passed between them. His mother thus sworn to amendment of life, and to secrecy as regards himself, Hamlet has effected his purpose with her. But to all else, Horatio excepted, he has still to maintain his disguise; and when shortly afterwards Rosencrantz and Guildenstern come upon him, he instantly relapses into irrelevant language. So, when summoned by the king, he befools him as before with witty extravagance and badinage, though when left alone again abandoning all incoherency of thought. For a while we hear nothing more of him, for he is on his voyage to England. But on a sudden two letters arrive from him, one to Horatio, calm, practical, and exact; the other to the king, fantastic and exaggerated. The letters are shortly followed by his appearance in the churchyard where Ophelia's grave is being dug. There, as neither the sexton nor the clown knows him, he is free to talk without disguise, and the most critical disputants of his sanity would be at a loss to find anything in his remarks which savours of a disordered mind. While yet in conversation with Horatio, he is interrupted by the funeral procession bearing to her grave his fondly loved Ophelia, of whose death he is so far unaware. When the coffin is lowered into the earth, Laertes in a passion of extravagant grief leaps into the grave, and Hamlet rushing forward in equal frenzy leaps after him, declaring that "forty thousand brothers could not with all their quantity of love Make up my sum." A struggle follows between Hamlet and Laertes; but they are at length parted, and the former, accompanied by Horatio, leaves the scene. Later on, alone with his one friend,

Hamlet relates in minute detail the circumstances of his escape from being carried into England, and plainly announces his intention of killing the king. To them at this point comes a fantastic courtier, Osric, with a challenge from Laertes to a bout at fencing, the king having laid a wager that Hamlet, with certain odds given, will prove himself more than a match for his opponent. Osric is too great a fool for it to be necessary that Hamlet should assume the cloak of insanity; but answering him with a witty imitation of his own affected jargon, he dismisses him with an acceptance of the challenge; and shortly afterwards engages in the combat which, as we have seen, ends fatally to both Laertes and himself.

Thus it appears that in every single instance in which Hamlet's madness is manifested, he has good reason for assuming that disguise; while, on the other hand, wherever there was no necessity to hoodwink any one, his thought, language, and actions bear no resemblance to unsoundness of intellect. Two further facts have to be borne in mind. The one is that Hamlet's single friend, in whom he placed a thorough trust, neither by word nor act shows the slightest sign of a belief in his insanity. On the contrary, he at once accepts the idea of the personation, pledges himself to secrecy, takes an active part in the discovery of the king's guilt, and encourages Hamlet to execute his vengeance. The other fact is that in the story from which Shakespeare takes his plot the insanity of the hero is avowedly a disguise; and that while in the earlier quarto Shakespeare gives the imitation a much closer resemblance to reality, in the later quarto he softens down the picture, apparently in order

that with his audience there may arise no misconception of the truth.

Incidentally I have now considered the question whether Hamlet, though mad at the outset, becomes so after the acting of the Court-play; and there remains only the theory that he was neither mad at any period nor pretended to be mad. This is Furness's position, and "in view of the fact that he has faithfully read and reported all the arguments on that side," he "begs the advocates of the theory of feigned insanity to allow him, out of reciprocal courtesy, to ask how they account for Hamlet's being able, in the flash of time between the vanishing of the Ghost and the coming of Horatio and Marcellus, to form, horror-struck as he was, a plan for the whole conduct of his future life?" To this I would reply by asking, Does Hamlet form such plan in this moment of time? I think not. His first assumption of eccentricity or mysterious reserve is when to the shouts of Horatio and Marcellus, "Illo, ho, ho, my lord!", he answers with the cry used by falconers to reclaim their hawks, which those shouts have suggested. Now, this is not immediately after the Ghost has left him, for he has had time for considerable reflection, and for writing down a memorandum as to the oath he has given to the Ghost. If during that interval he also comes to the decision that it will not be advisable to communicate to Horatio and Marcellus what had passed since he left them, there is nothing to be wondered at. To Horatio alone he would probably not have hesitated to tell the whole story, but with Marcellus, a mere acquaintance, it is different. He has therefore to plan some way of getting out of the difficulty,

and the accidental form of the shouts to which he replies suggests, I think, the idea of baffling inquiry by the use of incoherent, or at least irrelevant, answers. His stratagem succeeds, and for a time he holds Horatio and Marcellus at arms' length. But before separating from them he determines to bind his companions by an oath not to reveal what they have seen. As the oath is being administered, the Ghost from beneath three several times calls upon them to swear, and thus greatly emphasizes the sanctity of their pledge. Possibly under temptation they might, or at least Marcellus might, break an oath made to Hamlet alone; but an oath fortified by terrors of the supernatural is something too dread for any such treachery. Hamlet therefore now feels secure *on this point.* But he has baffled his companions by an appearance of strangeness, and it probably now occurs to him that a like simulation may be useful in the difficulties before him. Such simulation, however, would be of no avail if Marcellus and Horatio were free to speak of the manner in which he had met their inquiries, and therefore he anticipates all risk by a confession that he may perchance hereafter think meet to put on a disposition similar to that already assumed towards them; while by a second oath of equal solemnity to the former one he binds them not so much as to give the faintest hint that if they chose they could explain his strangeness, and to this pledge as before the Ghost from beneath adjures them. It therefore seems to me that Hamlet's resolution, which so far only a "perchance," is not formed in the sudden way that Furness supposes; and it is to be further observed that we have no proof of that resolution being put into immediate action. Between the first and

second Acts a considerable time has elapsed, for Polonius's conversation with his servant shows that Laertes must have been in Paris for some weeks at all events. That Hamlet's lunacy has for some time past been observed is, indeed, clear; but we have nothing to show that he has not had an ample interval to mature into a distinct and consistent plan an idea which at first shadowed itself out to him in a vague indeterminate shape.

Since the days of Warburton, it has been vigorously disputed whether this speech was of Shakespeare's own writing, or was borrowed from some old drama; whether, if Shakespeare's, it was written for the occasion, or was part of a tragedy he had lying by him; whether, again, if his own, it was intended to be a satirical imitation of the turgid dramas in vogue before his time, or an attempt to show how much better than his contemporaries he could write on such a theme; finally, whether, whoever the author, Hamlet's commendations are to be taken as serious or as ironical. My own conviction is that it is Shakespeare's own work specially done for the occasion; that the intention is incidentally to ridicule the tumid style of the older tragedians; that the praise put into Hamlet's mouth is in ironical excuse for introducing such bombast; that the effect produced upon the actor who recites the lines is emphasized merely in order to contrast the weakness of the motive by which he is stirred to such emotion with the greatness of the motive by which Hamlet ought to have been aroused to action. It seems impossible to believe that Shakespeare could at any time have regarded as real poetry such lines as 435-40, 449-55, 471-3, 481-94; still less that when he wrote *Hamlet* he should seriously commend them. The "one speech"; ii. 2. 426-94.

The "dozen or sixteen lines"; ii. 2. 513.

On this point the controversy is as to whether the lines which Hamlet had promised to insert in the play are to be found in it at all, and, if so, which they are. Sievers, who was apparently the first critic to draw attention to the question, supposed that ll. 245-50, in iii. 2., represent all that were actually delivered, the speech being interrupted by the king's rising. To the Cowden Clarkes the marked difference in diction and thought of ll. 182-207 as compared with the rest of the play indicates them as Hamlet's insertion; and further they point out that if those lines be omitted, there is no break in the sense. Malleson, in answer to this supposition, remarks first that these lines "do not apply to the king's character or position, but rather to Hamlet himself: (2) there is nothing in them of the torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion that Hamlet was so anxious should not be torn into tatters; and, lastly, there was one *scene* which Hamlet tells Horatio is to be the test, during which he is to watch the king with every faculty of his being, while Hamlet will do the same during one *speech*. Beyond doubt the *scene* is where poison is poured into the Player-King's ear, and here, likewise, at the crisis of the plot is to be found the *speech*, viz. 'Thoughts black,' etc., and this is Hamlet's addition to the play"... Seeley, on the other hand, believed that the dozen or sixteen lines were some of those which make up the long speech beginning 'I do believe you think what now you speak.' Two characteristics, he points out, the inserted speech must have, (1) it must consist of some dozen or sixteen lines; (2) being an insertion, it must be such a speech as can be removed without affecting the action of the play; and in no other speech are these characteristics

found. Ingleby holds that Hamlet writes no speech at all, whether of six, twelve or sixteen lines, nor recites such a speech. Finally, Furness sums up the controversy, and as it seems to me conclusively, in the following words: "It is to task the credulity of an audience too severely to represent the possibility of Hamlet's finding an old play exactly fitted to Claudius's crime, not only in the plot, but in all the accessories, even to a single speech which should tent the criminal to the very quick. In order, therefore, to give an air of probability to what everyone would feel to be thus highly improbable, Shakespeare represents Hamlet as adapting an old play to his present needs by inserting in it some pointed lines. Not that such lines were actually inserted, but, mindful of this proposal of Hamlet's, the spectator is prepared to listen to a play which is to unkennel the king's occulted guilt in a certain speech; the verisimilitude of all the circumstances is thus maintained. No matter how direct or pointed the allusion to the king's guilt may be, we accept it all, secure under Shakespeare's promise that the play shall be made to hit Claudius fatally. And we hear the allusion to this promise in Hamlet's cry of exultation over the success of his attempt at play-writing" ... The arguments as I have stated them are but a brief summary of the controversy as summarized in the *New Variorum Shakespeare*.

Hamlet's age. If the word of the Grave digger in v. 1. is to be taken, Hamlet was at the time exactly thirty years old. There are, however, several difficulties in the way of believing his statement. Some of these are that Hamlet and his associates are still at the University; that to speak of the love of a man of thirty as "a violet in the youth of

primy nature" would be ridiculous; that if Hamlet were thirty, his mother would hardly be the object of such a passion as that of Claudius; that Laertes when cautioning his sister against entertaining Hamlet's proffers of love, evidently speaks of him as being at an age of changeful fancies and fleeting attachments; that much of Hamlet's behaviour indicates the daring, wilful, defiant action of a high-spirited, sensitive youth; that at the age of thirty Hamlet would not have tamely submitted to his uncle's usurpation and been contented to go back to the University. On the other hand it is urged as utterly improbable that Hamlet's soliloquies should have been put into the mouth of a youth of seventeen; that none of Shakespeare's heroes are so juvenile; that Hamlet's observations on society point to considerable experience of the ways of the world; that his schoolfellows would not be of an age to be sent on a critical mission to England; that Shakespeare elsewhere speaks of men as being still young at thirty-five, or even forty. The only satisfactory conclusion on the subject seems to me that suggested by Furnivall. "I look upon it as certain," he says, "that when Shakespeare began the play he conceived Hamlet as quite a young man. But as the play grew, as greater weight of reflection, of insight into character, of knowledge of life, etc., were wanted, Shakespeare necessarily and naturally made Hamlet a formed man; and, by the time that he got to the Grave-diggers' scene, told us the Prince was thirty,—the right age for him then; but not his age when Laertes and Polonius warned Ophelia against his blood that burned, his youthful fancy for her,—'a toy in blood.'"

The following is Daniel's Time Analysis as given in the *New Shakspere Society's Transactions* for 1877-9, pp. 214, 5:

Day 1. Act i. sc. 1-3.
Day 2 Act i. sc. 4 and 5. *An interval* of rather more than two months.
Day 3. Act ii. sc. 1 and 2.
Day 4. Act iii. sc. 1-4—Act. iv. sc. 1-3.
Day 5. Act iv. sc. 4. *An interval*—a week?
Day 6. Act iv. sc. 5-7.
Day 7. Act v. sc. 1 and 2

For the interval of one week Marshall, *A Study of Hamlet*, gives two months, which Daniel considers "inconsistent with the movements of the principal personage of the drama. Hamlet's '*sudden* and more strange return' (iv. 7. 47, 8), and the king's comment thereon (ll. 61-3), are opposed to the notion of a longer period than the lapse of a few days since his departure"... Marshall marks an interval of two days after iv. 7, and gives two days as the time of Act v.

Note referred to on page xviii.

When Marston, *The Malcontent*, iii. 1. 250, puts into the mouth of the disguised Malevole the words "Illo, ho, ho, ho! art there, old truepenny?" he does it to mark the sudden change of Malevole's behaviour on the entrance of Mendoza, before whom it is necessary to keep up the disguise which for a time he had laid aside when talking with his confidant, Celso.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, OSRIC, A Gentleman, — courtiers.
A Priest.
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, — officers.
FRANCISCO, a soldier.
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns, grave-diggers
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
A Captain.
English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE: *Denmark.*

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle.*

FRANCISCO *at his post. Enter to him* BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?
Fran. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.
Ber. Long live the king!
Fran. Bernardo?
Ber. He.
Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.
Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.
Fran. For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.
Ber. Have you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring.
Ber. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.
Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.
Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier
Who hath relieved you?
Fran. Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit.*
Mar. Holla! Bernardo!
Ber. Say,
What, is Horatio there?
Hor. A piece of him.
Ber. Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.
Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?
Ber. I have seen nothing.
Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night;
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.
Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.
Ber. Sit down awhile:
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.
Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
Ber. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Enter Ghost.

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!
Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.
Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.
Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like : it harrows me with fear and wonder.
Ber. It would be spoke to.
Mar. Question it, Horatio.
Hor. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march ? by heaven I charge thee, speak !
Mar. It is offended.
Ber. See, it stalks away !
Hor. Stay ! speak, speak ! I charge thee, speak !
[*Exit Ghost.*
Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.
Ber. How now, Horatio ! you tremble and look pale :
Is not this something more than fantasy ?
What think you on't ?
Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
Mar. Is it not like the king ?
Hor. As thou art to thyself :
Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated ;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.
Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.
Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not ;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war ;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is't that can inform me?
Hor. That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other—
As it doth well appear unto our state
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.
Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so:
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king

That was and is the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again

Re-enter Ghost.

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me: [*Cock crows.*
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike it with my partisan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here?

Hor. 'Tis here?

Mar. 'Tis gone! [*Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let 's do 't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle.*

Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, *and* Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein; in that the levies,

The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject: and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. }
Vol. } In that and all things will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.
[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Ham. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.
King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Ham. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.
Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.
Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on 't ! ah fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this !
But two months dead : nay, not so much, not two :
So excellent a king ; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr ; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !
Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on : and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on 't—Frailty, thy name is woman !—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears :—why she, even she—
O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules : within a month :
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
It is not nor it cannot come to good :
But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO.

Hor. Hail to your lordship !
Ham. I am glad to see you well :
Horatio,—or do I forget myself.
Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Ham. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name with you :
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?
Marcellus ?

Mar. My good lord—
Ham. I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.
Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.
Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student:
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.
Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.
Hor. Where, my lord?
Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.
Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Ham. Saw? who?
Hor. My lord, the king your father.
Ham. The king my father!
Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.
Ham. For God's love, let me hear.
Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,

Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did ;
And I with them the third night kept the watch :
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did ;
But answer made it none : yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak ;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to night?

Mar. } *Ber.* } We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Mar. } *Ber.* } Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

Mar.
Ber. } My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amazed you.

Ham. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar.
Ber. } Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw 't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled,—no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but H*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *A room in Polonius' house.*

Enter LAERTES *and* OPHELIA.

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

Laer. O, fear me not.
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with th

And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee !

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you ; go ; your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought :
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you ; and you yourself

Have of your audience been most free and bounteous
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.
Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.
Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?
Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.
Oph. My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion.
Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.
Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,

But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
The better to beguile. This is for all :
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment leisure,
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you : come your ways.
Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The platform*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.
Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.
Ham. What hour now ?
Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.
Mar. No, it is struck.
Hor. Indeed ? I heard it not : then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*
What does this mean, my lord ?
Ham. The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels ;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.
Hor. Is it a custom ?
Ham. Ay, marry, is 't :
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance,
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations :
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase

Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of base
Doth all the noble substance often dout
To his own scandal.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter Ghost.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel

Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again. I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be ruled; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,

And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.
Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.
Hor. Have after. To what issue will this come?
Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
Hor. Heaven will direct it.
Mar. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform.*

Enter GHOST *and* HAMLET.

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.
Ghost. Mark me.
Ham. I will.
Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
Ham. Alas, poor ghost!
Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.
Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
Ham. What?
Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine :
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list .
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Ham. O God !

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder !

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt ,
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :
Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused : but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul !
My uncle !

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce !—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven

And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me. [*Exit.*

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables,—meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark: [*Writing.*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'
I have sworn 't.

Mar. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord,—
Hor. }

Mar. [*Within*] Lord Hamlet,—

Hor. [*Within*] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Hor. [*Within*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lor

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is 't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?
Ham. O, wonderful!
Hor. Good my lord, tell it.
Ham. No; you'll reveal it.
Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.
Mar. Nor I, my lord.
Ham. How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?
But you'll be secret?
Hor. }
Mar. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.
Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.
Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.
Ham. Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you;
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.
Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
Ham. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, 'faith, heartily.
Hor. There's no offence, my lord.
Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.
Hor. What is't, my lord? we will.
Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Hor. } *Mar.* } My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear 't.

Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, truepenny?
Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage—
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen.
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Hic et ubique? then we 'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come;
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on,
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As, 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note,
That you know aught of me : this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*] So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you :
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is,
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let 's go together. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house.*

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said ; very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris ;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense ; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question

That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him:' do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:
But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so:' and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant.
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,

Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence;
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something: where did I leave?

Rey. At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,' and 'gentleman.'

Pol. At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;
He closes with you thus; 'I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in 's rouse;
There falling out at tennis.'
See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord!

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey. Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell! [*Exit Reynaldo.*

Enter OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia! what 's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
Pol. With what, i' the name of God?
Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.
Pol. Mad for thy love?
Oph. My lord, I do not know;
But truly, I do fear it.
Pol. What said he?
Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.
Pol. Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
Oph. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,

I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.
Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement
I had not quoted him : I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee ; but, beshrew my jealousy !
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king :
This must be known ; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and* Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern !
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so call it,
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of : I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time : so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you ;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz :
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him !

Queen. Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord ? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king :
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found

The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.
King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.
Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.
King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.
[*Exit Polonius.*
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.
Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.
King. Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?
Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Giving a paper*
That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
Most welcome home! [*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*
Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief: your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.
Queen. More matter, with less art.
Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.
I have a daughter—have while she is mine—
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise. [*Reads.*
'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'—
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus: [*Reads.*
'In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.'

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. [*Reads.*

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.

'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.'

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be:' and then I prescripts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed—a short tale to make—
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,

Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
That I have positively said ''Tis so,'
When it proved otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away:
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*

Enter HAMLET, *reading.*

O, give me leave:
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord!

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

Pol. [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

Pol. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave.

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be

delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir! [*Exit Polonius.*

Guil. My honoured lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not over happy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. What 's the news?

Ros. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark 's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing

either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow. 251

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros.
Guil. } We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore? 261

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour; I know the good king and queen have sent for you. 272

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by

what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. [*Aside to Guil.*] What say you?

Ham. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed? 320

Ros. No, indeed, are they not.

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose quills and dare scarce come thither. 328

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is 't possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away? 341

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Re-enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

Pol. Upon mine honour,—

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass,—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why,

'One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.'

Pol. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows, then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

'As by lot, God wot,'

and then, you know,

'It came to pass, as most like it was,'—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more: for look, where my abridgement comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last: comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

First Play. What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose

judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see—

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'—

it is not so:—it begins with Pyrrhus:—

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their vile murders: roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks'

So, proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

First Play. 'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,

Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for, lo ! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power ;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends !'

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on : he 's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps : say on : come to Hecuba.

First Play. 'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen—'

Ham. 'The mobled queen ?'

Pol. That 's good ; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Play. 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;

Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :
But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.'

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in 's eyes. Pray you, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well, I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used ; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time : after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodykins, man, much better : use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity : the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends : we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*] Dost thou hear me, old friend ; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

First Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could you not?

First Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' ye ; [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What 's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this: the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted;

But from what cause he will by no means speak.
Guild. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.
Queen. Did he receive you well?
Ros. Most like a gentleman.
Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.
Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.
Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?
Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.
Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.
King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.
Ros. We shall, my lord.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia:
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no

That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia.*] Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [*Aside.*] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautified with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burthen!

Pol. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.
[*Exeunt King and Polonius.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fo[illegible] but in 's own house. Farewell.

Oph[illegible] you sweet heavens!

Ha[illegible] marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy d[illegible] as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou

shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit.*

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter KING *and* POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There 's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger: which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,

For the demand of our neglected tribute :
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

Pol. It shall do well : but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia !
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said ;
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please ;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief : let her be round with him ;
And I 'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so :
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle*

Enter HAMLET *and* Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise :

I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

First Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

First Play. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt Players.*

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*] Will you two help to hasten them?

Ros.
Guil. } We will, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Ham. What ho! Horatio.

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
Which I have told thee, of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul

Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord:
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle: Get you a place.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and others.*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. What did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord. 109

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.' 120

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

Enter a King *and a* Queen *very lovingly; the* Queen *embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* King's *ears, and exit. The* Queen *returns; finds the* King *dead, and makes passionate action. The* Poisoner, *with some two or three* Mutes, *comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The* Poisoner *wooes the* Queen *with gifts: she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.* [*Exeunt.*

Oph. What means this, my lord? 133

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. [*Exit.*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King *and* Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Ham. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity:
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,

And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now!

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [*Exit.*

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for 's estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What, frighted with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light: away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very—pajock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome

answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows,'—the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter Players *with recorders.*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony: I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that 's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then I will come to my mother by and by. [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

Ham. By and by is easily said. [*Exit Polonius.*] Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world : now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :
Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent ! [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ;
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you :
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide :
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of [illegible]. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone [illegible] like a gulf, doth draw

What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.
King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.
Guil. } *Ros.* } We will haste us.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home:
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.
King. Thanks, dear my lord.
[*Exit Polonius.*
O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. [*Retires and kneels.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do it. And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*

King. [*Rising.*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The Queen's closet.*

Enter QUEEN *and* POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [*Within.*] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you,
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.
[*Polonius hides behind the arras.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.
Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet!
Ham. What 's the matter now?
Queen. Have you forgot me?
Ham. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.
Queen. Nay, then, I 'll set those to you that can speak.
Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!
Pol. [*Behind.*] What, ho! help, help, help!
Ham. [*Drawing.*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras.*
Pol. [*Behind.*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*
Queen. O me, what hast thou done?
Ham. Nay, I know not:
Is it the king?
Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
Ham. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
Queen. As kill a king!
Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.
[*Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.*
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damned custom have not brass'd it so

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.
Queen. What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?
Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.
Queen. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?
Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,

Else could you not have motion ; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd ; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman blind ?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason pandars will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;
No more, sweet Hamlet !

Ham. A murderer and a villain ;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket !

Queen. No more !

Ham. A king of shreds and patches,—

Enter Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards ! What would your gracious figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad ?

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul:
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[*Exit Ghost.*

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.
Ham. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word: which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.
Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on.
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,
[*Pointing to Polonius*
I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,

To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.
Queen. What shall I do?
Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.
Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.
Ham. I must to England; you know that?
Queen. Alack,
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.
Ham. There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,

When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing :
I 'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.
Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

King. There 's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves :
You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night !

King. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier : in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat !'
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed !
It had been so with us, had we been there :
His liberty is full of threats to all ;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd ?

It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,
This mad young man: but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?
Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.
King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
Come, Gertrude, we 'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what 's untimely done: so, haply, slander,
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Safely stowed.

Ros. / *Guil.* [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Ham. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

Guil. A thing, my lord!

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter KING, *attended.*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes:
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

How now! what hath befall'n?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET *and* GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper! where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service. two dishes. but to one table: that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till you come. [*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England!

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England! [*Exit.*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*
And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *a* Captain, *and* Soldiers, *marching.*

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on. [*Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.*

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and others.*

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.
Cap. Yes, it is already garrison'd.
Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.
Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [*Exit.*
Ros. Will 't please you go, my lord?
Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
[*Exeunt all except Hamlet.*
How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great

Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit.*

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, *and a* Gentleman.

Queen. I will not speak with her.
Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract:
Her mood will needs be pitied.
Queen. What would she have?
Gent. She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.
Hor. 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
Queen. Let her come in. [*Exit Horatio.*
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is.

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?
Queen. How now, Ophelia?
Oph. [*Sings*] How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.
Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?
Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.
[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia,—
Oph. Pray you, mark.
[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow,

Enter KING.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.
Oph. [*Sings*] Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did
With true-love showers.
King. How do you, pretty lady?
Oph. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!
King. Conceit upon her father.
Oph. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:
[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

King. How long has she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [*Exit.*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [*Exit Horatio.*

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain:
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [*A noise within.*

Queen. Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

Enter another Gentleman.

What is the matter?
Gent. Save yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king:'
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds:
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'
Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!
King. The doors are broke. [*Noise within.*

Enter LAERTES, *armed;* Danes *following.*

Laer. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.
Danes. No, let's come in. pray,
Laer. I pray you, give me leav.oughts.
Danes. We will, we will. [*They retire without.* remembrance
Laer. I thank you: keep the door. O thou
Give me my father! ...ines: there's rue
Queen. Calmly, good Laertes ...ay call it herb-grace
Laer. That drop of blood that's calm ... rue with a difference.
King. What is the cause, Laertes, ...u some violets, but they
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like: they say he made a good
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fe
There's such divinity doth hedge ... sweet Robin is all my joy.
That treason can but peep ... ...ction, passion, hell itself,
Acts little of his will. ... ...al to prettiness.
Why thou art thus ... ...ce will he not come again?
Speak, man. ... ...nd will he not come again?
Laer. Where is ... No, no, he is dead:

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I 'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I 'll be revenged
Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I 'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

In *Laer.* None but his enemies.

Divid*King.* Will you know them then?

Without To his good friends thus wide I 'll ope my arms;
Last, and as kind life-rendering pelican,
Her brother is with my blood.
Feeds on his won Why, now you speak
And wants not buzz a true gentleman.
With pestilent speeches your father's death,
Wherein necessity, of mat grief for it,
Will nothing stick our persgement pierce
In ear and ear. O my dear G
Like to a murdering-piece, in ma r come in.
Gives me superfluous death. that?

Queen. Alack, w

King. Where are my Switzers?
door. es salt,

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is 't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. [*Sings*]

They bore him barefaced on the bier:
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear:—

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. [*Sings*] You must sing a-down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than ma

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[*Sings*] For bonnie sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Oph. [*Sings*] And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead:

Go to thy death-bed :
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll :
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan :
God ha' mercy on his soul !

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye. [*Exit.*

Laer. Do you see this, O God !

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction ; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so ;
His means of death, his obscure funeral—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

King. So you shall ;
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter HORATIO *and a* Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me.

Serv. Sailors, sir : they say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in. [*Exit Servant.*
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors

First Sail. God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

First Sail. He shall, sir, an 't please him. There 's a letter for you, sir : it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England ; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*Reads*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king : they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them : on the instant they got clear of our ship ; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy : but they knew what they did ; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent ; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb ; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England : of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters ;
And do 't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle.*

Enter KING *and* LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,

Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears: but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
I loved your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger.

How now! what news?
Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your majesty; this to the queen.
King. From Hamlet! who brought them?
Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:
They were given me by Claudio; he received them
Of him that brought them.
King. Laertes, you shall hear them.
Leave us. [*Exit Messenger.*

[*Reads*] 'High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

'HAMLET.'

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?
Laer. Know you the hand?
King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'
Can you advise me?
Laer. I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'
King. If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so? how otherwise?—
Will you be ruled by me?
Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.
King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall .
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be ruled ;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

King It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine . your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege

Laer. What part is that, my lord ?

King A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy .—
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback : but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't ; he grew unto his seat ;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Came short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was't ?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well : he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,

And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this,—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father;
But that I know love is begun by time;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much: that we would do,
We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber?
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't:
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft! let me see:
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:
I ha't:
When in your motion you are hot and dry—
As make your bouts more violent to that end—
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

Enter QUEEN.

How now, sweet queen!

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples.
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it. [*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude:
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let's follow. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A churchyard.*

Enter two CLOWNS, *with spades, &c.*

First Clo. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Sec. Clo. I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

First Clo. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

Sec. Clo. Why, 'tis found so.

First Clo. It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal she drowned herself wittingly.

Sec. Clo. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

First Clo. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,—mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Sec. Clo. But is this law?

First Clo. Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

Sec. Clo. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

First Clo. Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

Sec. Clo. Was he a gentleman?

First Clo. A' was the first that ever bore arms.

Sec. Clo. Why, he had none.

First Clo. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

Sec. Clo. Go to.

First Clo. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Sec. Clo. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

First Clo. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

Sec. Clo. 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

First Clo. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Sec. Col. Marry, now I can tell.

First Clo. To't.

Sec. Clo. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO, *at a distance.*

First Clo. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker:' the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan: fetch me a stoup of liquor. [*Exit Sec. Clown.*

[*He digs, and sings.*

In youth, when I did love, did love,
  Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
  O, methought, there was nothing meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

First Clo. [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such. [*Throws up a skull.*

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my lord Such-a one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, and we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

First Clo. [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.
[*Throws up another skull.*

Ham. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with

his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

First Clo. Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

First Clo. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

First Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

First Clo. For none, neither.

Ham. Who's to be buried in't?

First Clo. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

First Clo. Of all the days i' the year, I come to 't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

First Clo. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clo Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it 's no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

First Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

First Clo. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

First Clo. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

First Clo. Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

First Clo. I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die—as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in - he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

First Clo. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here 's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

First Clo. A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

First Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

First Clo. E'en that.

Ham. Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull.*

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

Enter Priests, *&c. in procession; the Corpse of* OPHELIA, LAERTES *and* Mourners *following;* KING, QUEEN, *their trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life: 'twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with Horatio.*

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

First Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

First Priest. No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' the earth:
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: farewell! [*Scattering flowers.*
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,

And not t' have strew'd thy grave.
Laer. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:
[*Leaps into the grave.*
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of Blue Olympus.
Ham. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane. [*Leaps into the grave.*
Laer. The devil take thy soul!
[*Grappling with him.*
Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.
King. Pluck them asunder.
Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!
All. Gentlemen,—
Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*
Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
Queen. O my son, what theme?
Ham. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
King. O, he is mad, Laertes.
Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Swounds, show me what thou 'lt do:
Woo 't weep? woo 't fight? woo 't fast? woo 't tear thyself?
Woo 't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?
I 'll do 't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou 'lt mouth,
I 'll rant as well as thou.
Queen. This is mere madness:
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.
Ham. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*
King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*Exit Horatio.*
[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We 'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living monument:
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.*

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;
You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!
Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,—
And praised be rashness for it,—let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do fail: and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will,—
Hor. That is most certain.
Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—
O royal knavery!—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.
Hor Is't possible?
Ham. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?
Hor. I beseech you.
Ham. Being thus be-netted round with villanies,—
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play—I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair and labour'd much
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know

The effect of what I wrote?
Hor. Ay, good my lord.
Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death.
Not shriving-time allow'd.
Hor. How was this seal'd?
Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscribed it, gave 't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.
Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.
Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;
They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.
Hor. Why, what a king is this!
Ham. Does it not, thinks 't thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is 't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm? and is 't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life 's no more than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours:
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace! who comes here?

Enter OSRIC.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed

Ham But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember—

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.*

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do 't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant—

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he 's unfellowed.

Ham. What 's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer 'no'?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all 's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury: there 's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to

come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, *and* Attendants *with foils, &c.*

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.
[*The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.*

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.
Ham. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.
Laer. Come, one for me.
Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.
Laer. You mock me, sir.
Ham. No, by this hand.
King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?
Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.
King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.
Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.
Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a length?
[*They prepare to play.*
Osr. Ay, my good lord.
King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.
Ham. Come on, sir.
Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*
Ham. One.

Laer. No.
Ham. Judgement.
Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.
Laer. Well; again.
King. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here's to thy health.
[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*
Give him the cup.
Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you?
Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.
King. Our son shall win.
Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
Ham. Good madam!
King. Gertrude, do not drink.
Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.
King. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.
Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.
Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.
Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now
King. I do not think't.
Laer. [*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.
Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.
Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*
Osr. Nothing, neither way.
Laer. Have at you now!
[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*
King. Part them; they are incensed.
Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen fal*
Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!
Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is't, Laertes?
Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
Ham. How does the queen?
King. She swounds to see them bleed.
Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies.*
Ham. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd: Treachery!
Seek it out.
Laer. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.
Ham. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work. [*Stabs the King.*
All. Treason! treason!
King. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.
Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. [*King dies*
Laer. He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*
Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;

Thou livest ; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.
Hor. Never believe it :
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :
Here 's yet some liquor left.
Ham. As thou 'rt a man,
Give me the cup : let go ; by heaven, I 'll have 't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. [*March afar off, and shot within*
What warlike noise is this ?
Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.
Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit :
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophecy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [*Dies*
Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince ;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !
Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *the* English Ambassadors, *and others.*

Fort. Where is this sight ?
Hor. What is it ye would see ?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

First Amb. The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you:
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about: so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies: such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

NOTES.

Act I. Scene I.

Stage Direction. *Elsinore*, the modern Helsingor, a seaport on the north-east coast of Denmark, to the north-west of Copenhagen: *A platform before the castle*, a terrace in front of the castle, up and down which the sentinels patrolled.

2. **me**, emphatic; it is for the watch to challenge any one who appears, not for him to challenge the watch: **unfold yourself**, declare who you are.

3. **Long live the king!** Malone supposed this to be the watchword, but Delius points out that Horatio and Marcellus, when similarly challenged, give another answer, and Pye believes that Bernardo's answer corresponds to the former usage in France, where to the common challenge *Qui vive?* (who goes there?) the answer was *Vive le Roi!* (long live the king!), like the modern answer, 'A friend.'

6. **You come ... hour**, you have come with exact punctuality to your time; for **upon**, = at, or immediately after, see Abb. § 191. Though Francisco is, in l. 16, spoken of as an "honest soldier," and in the *dramatis personæ* is called "a soldier," his question "Bernardo?" is more like that of an equal, and it has not been explained how a common soldier came to be relieved by an officer.

7. **now**, just this moment: **get thee**, on verbs followed by *thee* instead of *thou*, see Abb. §§ 205, 212.

8. **much**, great in quantity, formerly used of size also: **bitter**, bitterly.

9. **sick at heart**, heartily weary, thoroughly exhausted, with watching in such weather.

10. **Have you ... guard?** has your watch been undisturbed by any alarm?

13. **rivals**, partners, associates; cp. *A. C.* iii. 5. 8, "Cæsar ... presently denied him *rivality;* would not let him partake in the

glory of the action"; i. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 31, "And many mo *corrivals*, and dear men Of estimation and command in arms." Elsewhere Shakespeare always uses the word in its modern sense. Trench, *Study of Words*, pp. 315, 6, says, "'Rivals' properly are those who dwell on the banks of the same river. But as all experience shows, there is no such fruitful source of contention as a water right, and these would be often at strife with one another in regard to the periods during which they severally had a right to the use of the stream, turning it off into their own fields before the time, or leaving open the sluices beyond the time, or in other ways interfering, or being counted to interfere, with the rights of their neighbours. And in this way 'rivals' came to be applied to any who were on any grounds in unfriendly competition with one another."

15. **ground**, soil, land: **liegemen**, subjects. Of *liege*, Skeat (*Ety. Dict.*) says, "We now say 'a *liege* vassal,' *i.e.* one bound to his lord; it is easy to see that this sense is due to a false etymology which connected the word with Lat. *ligatus*, bound .. But the fact is that the older phrase was 'a *liege* lord,' and the older sense 'a *free* lord,' in exact contradiction to the popular notion . 'A *liege* lord' seems to have been a lord of a free band; and his *lieges*, though serving under him, were privileged men, free from all other obligations; their name being due to their *freedom*, not to their service" ..: **the Dane**, the king of Denmark, Claudius, uncle to the Prince.

16. **Give you good night**, *i.e. God* give you, etc. Cp. *god-den*, *God dig-you-den*, *God gi' god-den*, *God ye god-den*, frequent in Shakespeare.

19. **A piece of him**, a bantering answer to Bernardo's surprise; as one might say, 'Well, it looks like it.' Ingleby, *Shakespeare Hermeneutics*, p. 137, illustrates the expression from Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*, where the heroine "has come upon the blind Rochester, and placed her hand in his: 'Her very fingers,' he cried, 'her small, light fingers! *If so, there must be more of her.*'"

21. **What, has ... to-night?** The quartos give this speech to Horatio; and many editors follow them on the ground that Marcellus would not use the contemptuous expression **this thing** of that which he immediately afterwards calls "this dreaded sight," while in the mouth of the sceptical Horatio such contempt would be quite appropriate. Grant White objects that Horatio does not yet believe that the Ghost has appeared at all; but in his mouth the words need not mean more than 'has your imagination again been conjuring up this apparition you told me of?'

23. **fantasy**, fancy; the fuller form of the word which has now been corrupted into 'fancy.'

24. **And will** ... **him**, and refuses to yield himself to belief.

25. **dreaded**, dreadful; cp. *Cor.* iii. 3. 98, "in the presence of *dreaded* justice": **of**, by.

27. **the minutes of this night**, indicating the tediousness, and perhaps the closeness, of the watch they were to keep. Steevens quotes Ford, *Fancies, Chaste and Noble*, v. 1. 129, "I promise, ere *the minutes of the night* Warm us to rest, such satisfaction As more you cannot wish for"; where, however, the *short* time to elapse is indicated.

29. **approve our eyes**, confirm by his acknowledgment the truthfulness of our eyesight; admit that we were not the victims of an allusion; for **approve**, in this sense, cp. *A. C.* i. 1. 60, "I am full sorry That he *approves* the common liar, who Thus speaks of him at Rome."

30. **Tush**, an exclamation of impatient incredulity; **awhile**, for a time; originally two words, A.S. *ane hwile*, (for) a while.

31-3. **And let us** ... **seen**, and let us, in the endeavour to convince you, once more attack your ears that so resolutely refuse to listen with belief, by telling you what for two nights together we have seen. In keeping up the metaphor in **assail** and **fortified** (words, as Eltze points out, so appropriate in the mouth of a soldier), Shakespeare treats the clause **What** ... **seen** as though it has been preceded by 'inform,' 'relate to,' instead of **assail**.

33. **sit we down**, Abbott (§ 361) thinks we may perhaps explain the so-called imperative here as = 'suppose we sit down?' 'what if we sit down?'

35. **Last night of all**, only last night.

36-8. **When yond** .. **burns**, when that very star which you see to the west of the pole had travelled along its path to light up that part of the heavens in which it is now shining, *i.e.* almost at this very time last night; **yond**, properly an adverb, *yon* being the adjective; **Had** ... **illume**, not, had caused its course to light up, but, proceeded on its course with the object of lighting up.

39. **beating**, much the same as 'tolling,' but more vividly indicating the harsh clangour of the bell as heard in the deep stillness of midnight; cp. *K. J.* iii. 1. 37-9, "if *the midnight bell* Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth *Sound one* into the drowsy ear of night."

40. **break thee off**, cease speaking; see note on l. 7.

41. **In the same figure**, in the same shape and dress.

42. **Thou art a scholar**, the usual form of exorcism being in Latin, a scholar would be required for the purpose; cp. *M. A.* ii. 1. 264, "I would to God some *scholar* would *conjure* her." Reed compares Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Night-Walker*, ii. 1.

89-90, "Let's call the butler up, for he speaks Latin. And that will daunt the devil."

43. **the king**, *i e.* the dead king, Hamlet's father.

44. **harrows**, confounds, paralyzes; more usually spelt *harry*, the form *harrow* being "chiefly confined to the phrase 'the *Harrowing* of Hell,' *i.e.* the despoiling of hell by Christ . —A.S. *hergian*, to lay waste. Literally to over-run with an army" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Steevens compares *Comus*, 565, "Amazed I stood, *harrow'd* with grief and fear."

45. **It would be spoke to**, it desires to be spoken to. "There was, and is, a notion that a ghost cannot speak till it has been spoken to." (Cl. Pr. Edd.) For the conditional use of **would** in such phrases, see Abb. § 329, and for the curtailed form of the participle, § 343.

46-9. **What art thou .. march?** Of what nature are you that without right you claim as a time for your walking these peaceful hours of the night, and with equal want of right assume the noble and warlike form in which the majestic sovereign of this land was wont to walk when alive? **Denmark**, the king of Denmark; the name of the country being frequently used by Shakespeare in this way, *e.g.* *K. J.* i. 1. 20, "so answer *France*"; *W. T.* i. 1. 23, 4, "*Sicilia* cannot show himself over kind to *Bohemia*"; **sometimes**, formerly; in which as in other senses, Shakespeare uses *sometimes* and *sometime* indifferently.

50. **stalks**, strides with a slow and stately step; A.S. *stælcan*, to walk warily.

52. **will not**, is determined not to, etc.

53. **How now ... pale**, said with ironical surprise.

54. **Is not ... fantasy?** now that the apparition has so terrified you, you will hardly again twit us with being under a delusion.

56. **Before my God**, I speak in the presence of my God and call upon Him to witness that, etc.: **might**, could; see Abb. § 312.

... **eyes**, had it not been vouched for by the ... of my visual sense; had not the appeal been ... senses, and made in a way about which there could ... **sensible**, in this passive sense, cp. *Mach.* ii. ... not, fatal vision, *sensible* To feeling as to ... b. § 3; **avouch**, a substantive formed from ... from the Lat. *ad*, to, and *vocare*, to call.

... rily the very armour, but armour closely

... in personal combat; the verb is now used ... ly.

62. **when, in an angry parle**, when, on the occasion of a conference which ended in angry words; **parle**, and *parley* are elsewhere used by Shakespeare only of a friendly conference, or a conference held with the view of coming to an agreement, and we can hardly suppose blows to have been exchanged while the **parle** was going on.

63. **the sledded Polacks**, the Poles fighting from their sledges; it is not of course necessary to suppose that all the Polish army was in sledges, the word *sledded* being used merely as a graphic touch; "*Polack* was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: Fr. *Polaque*" (Johnson).

65. **jump at this dead hour**, just at this very hour of dead stillness; for **jump**, cp. below, v. 2. 386, and *Oth.* ii 3. 392, "And bring him *jump* when he may Cassio find soliciting his wife"; for **dead hour**, cp. *T. A.* ii. 3. 99, "at *dead* time of the night"; *H. V.* iii. *Chor.* 19, "as *dead* midnight still"; and the substantive, *Lucr.* 1625, "Far in the dreadful *dead* of dark midnight."

66. **gone by our watch**, passed by us then keeping watch.

67-9. **In what .. state**, though of many lines of thought I do not know which one would, if explored, show the particular danger threatened, the general drift of my opinion is to foreshadow *some* strange outbreak which shall shake our state; **gross and scope** is a hendiadys; for the former word, which is properly an adjective, cp. *M. V.* i. 3. 56, "I cannot instantly raise up the *gross* Of full three thousand marks"; for the latter, *R. II.* iii. 3. 112, "His coming hither hath no further *scope* Than for his lineal royalties"; **eruption**, here meaning violent disturbance, is in *J. C.* i. 3. 78, used in the plural of the natural phenomena supposed to indicate calamity to the state, "Yet prodigious grown And fearful, as these strange *eruptions* are."

70. **Good now**, very well, then; or perhaps used as in *W. T.* v. i. 19, "*good now*, Say so but seldom"; *C. E.* iv. 4. [illegible] "*Good now*, hold thy tongue," *i.e.* my good fellow: **tell me** [illegible] **knows**, let him who knows tell me.

71, 2. **Why this ... land**, why, night after night, the king's subjects are worn out by their vigilance so strictly observed with which we have all become so familiar; for transitive verbs formed from nouns and adjectives, see Abb. § 290; **subject**, used collectively.

73. **And why ... cannon**, and why, day after day, [illegible] casting o[illegible] cannon proceeds without interruption.

74. **And foreign ... war**, and why there is [illegible] with foreign countries for the purchase of, et[illegible]

75, 6. **Why such ... week**, why shipwrights ar[illegible] in the docks week-days and Sundays; [illegible]

(*Dict.*) has shown that to be *pressed*, in the sense of compelled to serve, has nothing to do with *press* in the sense of 'crush,' 'squeeze,' but is a corruption of *prest*, ready, *prest*-money being ready money advanced when a man was hired for service, the shilling now given to recruits. "At a later period," he says, "the practice of taking men for the public service by *compulsion* made the word to be understood as if it signified to *force* men into the service, and the original reference to earnest-money was quite lost sight of."

76, 7. **What might . day**, what can possibly be in preparation that all this heavy labour goes on day and night; for **toward** cp. below, v. 2. 376, "What feast is *toward* in thine eternal cell ..?, and *M. N. D.* iii. 1. 81, "What, a play *toward!*"

80. **the whisper goes so**, it is whispered that the reason of all this is such as I will relate to you.

81. **image**, semblance; not elsewhere used by Shakespeare of a ghostly apparition, though in ii. *H. VI.* ii. 2. 147, "And to survey his dead and earthly *image*," we have the word in the sense of that which in death is the mere semblance of the living man: **even but now**, redundant.

83. **Thereto ... pride**, he being goaded to do so by a spirit of strong emulation; cp. *Oth.* iii. 3. 412, "Prick'd to 't by foolish honesty and love."

84. **Dared**, challenged; in the sense of venturing to do a thing, the verb 'to dare' has 'durst' for its preterite; for **the**, denoting notoriety, see Abb. § 92.

85. **For so**, I say 'valiant,' for so he was accounted, etc.: **this side ... world**, the inhabitants of this portion of the world that is known to us.

86. **compact**, with the accent on the latter syllable, as always in Shakespeare.

87. **Well ratified .. heraldry**, "Law would be wanted to draw up accurately the contract, heraldry to give it a binding force in honour; as the court of chivalry has cognizance of contracts touching deeds of arms or of war out of the realm" (Moberly).

88. **with his life**, when forfeiting, losing, his life; **those his lands**, those lands of his.

89. **Which he .. of**, of which he was at the time possessed; **seized**, from O. F. *saisir, seisir*, to put one in possession of, to take possession of, a technical term in law still in use.

90. **the which**, for *the* making *which* more definite, and used where the antecedent, or some word like the antecedent, is repeated, or where such a repetition could be made if desired, see Abb. § 270: **moiety**, Lat. *medietas*, a half, is used by Shakespeare

as often for any portion as for the half: **competent**, adequate, sufficient; originally the present participle of the F. verb *competer*, to be sufficient for.

91. **gaged**, pledged, staked.

91, 2. **which had .. Fortinbras**, and this would have gone as an inheritance to Fortinbras; would have passed into his possession. For **return'd**, involving no idea of going *back*, cp. *Tim.* iii. 2. 92, "Had his necessity made use of me (*i.e.* had he in his necessity applied to me) I would have put my wealth into donation, And the best half should have *return'd* to him."

93-5. **as, by the same .. Hamlet**, in the same way that, by the agreement of which I have spoken, and the tenour of the stipulation formally ratified between them, his possessions passed to Hamlet; for **article**, properly a particular clause in a stipulation, cp. *H. V.* v. 2. 369, "The king hath granted every *article*"; for **covenant**, the quartos read *co-mart*, *i.e.* bargain; **young Fortinbras**, the son of King Hamlet's opponent.

96. **Of unimproved .. full**, of fiery and full-blooded courage that has not yet been disciplined in action. Dyce, following Gifford, gives 'uncensured,' 'unimpeached,' as the meaning of **unimproved**, and no doubt 'improve' was formerly used as = reprove; but Horatio is clearly disparaging Fortinbras, and while allowing him plenty of mettle, speaks of it as intemperate and untried. Cp. *H. VIII.* i. 1. 132-4, "anger is like A *full*, *hot* horse, who being allowed his way, Self-*mettle* tires him"; **mettle**, only another spelling of *metal*, the former being used in a figurative, the latter in a literal, sense. The construction of the line is not, as Johnson takes it, 'Full of unimproved mettle,' but '(a man) of unimproved mettle, which is hot and full.'

97. **skirts**, the outlying districts where there would be plenty of young fellows ready for any employment; used much in the way that we speak of the 'purlieus,' and Shakespeare of the 'suburbs,' of a city, where the refuse of society is gathered together: **here and there**, in all directions.

98. **Shark'd up**, greedily swept up, as the shark voraciously sweeps up all prey that comes in its way: **a list**, a gang; literally, catalogue: **lawless resolutes**, wild-blooded young fellows ready for any enterprise however desperate and unjustifiable; for instances of inflected adjectives and participles, see Abb. § 433.

99. **For food and diet**, merely for their keep, caring nothing about being paid.

100. **That hath .. in 't**, such as has plenty of resolution in it, one that indicates a determined purpose: **which is no other**, and this enterprise is nothing else than.

101. **As it ... state,**— for so it plainly appears to our rulers; for **state**, cp. *Lear*, v. 1. 22, "With others whom the rigour of our *state* Forced to cry out."

102. **of us**, from us.

102, 3. **by strong .. compulsative**, by force of arms, and on compulsory conditions; *i.e.* not on terms of agreement such as had been entered into between Hamlet and the elder Fortinbras; the quartos give *compulsatory*.

104. **So**, in the way I have already described: **I take it**, I understand.

106, 7. **the chief . land**, the main spring, origin, of all this hurry and bustle which we see throughout Denmark; for **head**, cp. *R. II.* i. 1. 97, "'all the treasons ... Fetch from false Mowbray their first *head* and spring'; **post-haste**, literally, the haste made by a post or runner; **romage**, "... the word [rummage] is merely due to the substantive *room-age*, formed by suffix *-age* ... from E. *room*, space. *Roomage* is a similar formation to *stowage*, and means much the same thing. It is an old nautical term for the close packing of things in a ship; hence was formed the verb to *roomage* or *romage*, *i.e.* to find room for or stow away packages; and the mariner who attended to this business was called the *roomager* or *romager*" .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

108. **I think ... so**, I think that this and no other must, as you say, be the cause of all this bustle; **be**, the subjunctive, indicating uncertainty; see Abb. § 299; **but**, used in its exceptive sense.

109, 10. **Well may it ... watch**, quite in keeping with such a state of things is it that this ominous apparition should pass through our midst when keeping watch, itself clad in armour as though prepared for battle; **sort**, agree with the present state of things; the substantive (from which the verb comes) means a lot, class, species, and is ultimately from the Lat. *sors*, *sortis*, destiny, chance, condition, state.

111. **That was ... wars**, whose action was, and still is, the subject of these wars, both past and now brewing between the two countries; cp. *T. C.* ii. 2. 18, "Let Helen go: Since the first sword was drawn about this *question*."

112. **A mote ... eye**, it (*sc.* the apparition) like a mote in the eye, which, minute as it is, causes that organ infinite pain, perplexes and molests our mental sight; **mote**, a particle of dust, speck, formerly spelt *moth*; Malone quotes Preface to Lodge's *Incarnate Devils*, 1596, "they are in the aire, like *atomi in sole*, *mothes* in the sonne."

113. **In the most ... Rome**, when Rome was at its height of power and glory; the palm was an emblem of victory. Wilson would print "State" with a capital, taking it as reigning city;

but it is the *time* rather than the *place* which is here indicated; and the meaning is just as was the case with Rome when at the zenith of its power, so with us who have reached a higher point than at any previous time, omens give warning of approaching troubles.

114. **mightiest,** supremely mighty; not mightiest of all that bore that name.

115-20. **The graves ... eclipse,** cp. *J. C.* i. 3. 3-32.

115. **stood tenantless,** opened and gave up their dead: **sheeted dead,** corpses clad in the winding-sheet, or shroud, in which they had been buried.

116. **squeak,** squeal, cry out in a shrill tone as if in anguish; **gibber,** gabble, talk in unintelligible language.

117, 8. **As stars ... sun.** In this corrupt passage various emendations and transpositions have been proposed, but probably a line, or more than one line, has dropped out. Malone suggests *Astres*, an old synonym for star, for **As stars,** and with this word, taking it in the sense of a spot of light, Brae thinks that **Disasters,** in the sense of spots of darkness, spots on the sun's disc, is contrasted: **the moist star,** the moon; cp. *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 162, "the chaste beams of the *watery moon*"; *W. T.* i. 2. 1. "Nine changes of the *watery star* hath been."

119. **upon whose ... stands,** which governs the ebb and flow of the tides; cp. *W. T.* i. 2. 427, "you may as well Forbid the sea for to obey the moon."

120. **Was sick almost ... eclipse,** was sick almost to death with the long and entire eclipse it suffered; was so long in a state of complete eclipse as to seem almost doomed to perish; **doomsday,** the day of doom or judgement, especially the day of the last judgement, on which the general doom will be pronounced; but here the day of death, as in *R. III.* v. 1. 12, "All-Soul's day is my body's *doomsday*."

121. **And even ... events,** and the precisely similar signs forerunning terrible events; **precurse,** not elsewhere used by Shakespeare, though Malone quotes *precurser*, *Phœnix and Turtle*, 6; **fierce,** cp. *K. J.* v. 7. 13, "*fierce* extremes."

househo
attendants
herbergeour ... from O. F. *herberger*, to harbour, lodge, or dwell in a house" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **still,** constantly: **the fates,** what was fated, destined, to happen.

123. **prologue ... on,** prologue to the disastrous events to be enacted here; for **omen,** in this sense, Farmer compares Heywood's *Life of Merlin*, "Merlin well vers'd in many a hidden

spell, His countries *omen* did long since foretell." For a similar thought expressed in the language of the theatre, cp. *Macb.* ii. 4. 5, 6, "Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's *act*, Threaten his bloody *stage*."

124. **together**, *i.e.* the heaven by comets, eclipses, etc., the earth by the appearance of ghosts: **demonstrated**, with the accent on the first syllable.

125. **climatures**, properly the influence of climate in its original sense of distance from the equator, but here apparently for the different regions of the land.

126. **But soft**, but hold, stop; said to himself as much as to those he is addressing: **lo**, "generally considered as equivalent to *look*; but the A.S. *lá*, *lo!* and *locian*, to look, have nothing in common but the initial letter. The fact is, rather, that *lá* is a natural interjection, to call attention" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

127. **I 'll cross it ... me**, I will walk across its path, intercept it, even though the result should be that it blast me; an allusion to the old belief that any one crossing, or being crossed by, a spirit came under its baneful influence: **illusion**, the sceptical Horatio still refuses to acknowledge the reality of the apparition.

128. **If thou .. voice**, if you are capable of making yourself heard in any way, or of using speech; not quite tautological.

130, 1. **If there be ... me**, if your appearance here means that there is any good deed to be done whereby you will be relieved, and which it will be to my credit to do; for **grace**, cp. i. *H. IV.* ii. 1. 79, "which for sport sake are content to *do* the profession some *grace*." Tschischwitz quotes Simrock, *Mythologie*, "A ghost can be not infrequently laid, especially when a living person accomplishes that for him which he, when alive, should have himself accomplished."

133. **If thou .. fate**, if you have some knowledge (obtained by means to which we have no access) of what destiny hangs over your country.

134. **Which, happily ... avoid**, foreknowledge of which may perhaps enable us to avoid; **happily** for *haply*, *i.e.* by hap, chance, is frequent in Shakespeare. Some editors take the word in its more ordinary sense, explaining which happy, or fortunate, foreknowledge may avoid; but the former sense seems more in accordance with the sceptical mind of Horatio.

136-8. **Or if ... death**, or if while living you have hoarded up, by burying it in the earth, treasure unjustly wrung from its owners, an offence for which men say, spirits like yourself are often condemned to wander up and down the earth; **walk**, in this special sense applied to spirits or spectres, is frequent in Shakespeare.

140. **partisan**, a kind of halberd, or long-handled axe, a weapon borne by foot-soldiers; "etymology doubtful; but the word must almost certainly be extended from O. H. G. *partá*. M. H. G. *barte*, a battle-axe, which occurs in E. *hal-berd*"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

141. **will not stand**, refuses to halt when called upon to do so.

143, 4. **We do it ... violence**, it is an insult on our part to make an attempt to offer violence to one so majestical in form and carriage.

145, 6. **For it ... mockery**, I say '*show* of violence,' for it, like the air, is invulnerable, and our blows thus spent in vain are but the merest mockery of enmity; for **invulnerable**, cp. *Macb.* v. 8. 9, "As easy mayst thou *the intrenchant* air With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed; *Temp.* iii. 3. 62-4, "as well Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs Kill the still-closing waters"; **vain blows**, blows made vain by the fact of the apparition being invulnerable.

147. **the cock**, Farmer quotes Bourne's *Antiquities of the Common People*, "It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions and go to their proper places. Hence it is that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go cheerfully to work at that time."

149. **Upon a fearful summons**, immediately upon hearing a summons that it dreads; for adjectives having both an active and a passive meaning, see Abb. § 3.

150. **the trumpet to the morn**, which summons the morning to awake as the trumpeter summons sleeping soldiers; **trumpet**, for 'trumpeter,' as in *K. J.* i. 1. 27, and *standard* for 'standard-bearer,' *Temp.* iii. 2. 18.

151. **lofty**, high-sounding, as in i. *H. IV.* v. 2. 98, "Sound all the *lofty* instruments of war"; but also perhaps with an allusion to the cock throwing up its head when crowing.

154. **extravagant**, stalking abroad; used again in its literal sense, *Oth.* i. 1. 137, "In an *extravagant* and wheeling stranger here and everywhere": **erring**, wandering; Steevens quotes Chapman's *Odyssey*, bk. iv., "My *erring* father," said of the [illegible] bk. ix., "*Erring* Grecians we, From [illegible] For both words, see Abb. *Intro.*

[illegible] tation to which it was restricted [illegible] night, *sc.* the regions of the dead; [illegible] kingdom, this *confine* of blood and [illegible] *L.* ii. 1. 24, with the accent on the

155, 6. **and of the truth ... probation**, and of the truth of this belief this object, a moment ago present to our sight, gave proof in disappearing at the cock's crow; for **probation**, cp. *Macb.* iii. 1. 80, "This I made good to you In our last conference, pass'd in *probation* with you, How you were borne in hand"; *Oth.* iii. 3. 365, "That the *probation* bear no hinge or loop To hang a doubt on." We now say 'to *make* proof,' or 'probation,' in the sense of obtaining proof by means of trial, and speak of 'giving proof' in the sense in which Shakespeare here uses **made probation**.

157. **faded**, faded away, gradually vanished; cp. *Temp.* iv. 1. 155, "And, like this insubstantial pageant *faded*, Leave not a rack behind": **on the crowing of the cock**, when the cock crowed.

158. **'gainst ... comes**, in anticipation of the coming of that time; cp. below, iii. 4. 50, and see Abb. § 142.

162. **no planets strike**, a reference to the old astrological belief in the malignant influence of the stars.

163. **takes**, strikes with disease, etc.; cp. *M. W.* iv. 4. 32, "And there he blasts the tree and *takes* the cattle," *Lear*, iii. 4. 61, "Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and *taking*." So, of witches, *A. C.* iv. 2. 37.

164. **so gracious**, so touched with heavenly grace.

165. **in part**, partly; the sceptical Horatio will not adr[illegible] unreservedly.

166. **in russet mantle clad**, dressed in roseate, or ruddy[illegible] the personification of the morning is carried on in [illegible] next line. Cp. Milton, *P. L.* v. 1, "Now morn her ro[illegible] in th' eastern clime Advancing, sowed the earth wit[illegible] pearls."

167. **eastern** is preferred by most modern editors to the reading of the quartos, as being more in accordance [illegible] poetical phraseology of the time.

168. **Break we**, see note on l. 33.

168, 9. **and by my ... impart**, and, if you will take my [illegible] let us, etc. Apparently a mixture of constructions betwee[illegible] my advice do you impart,' and 'if you agree with my advic[illegible] us impart.'

170. **upon my life**, *i.e.* I am ready to stake my life upon the certainty of the spirit doing as I say.

171. **dumb to us**, though dumb to us, or, which was dumb to us; referring to the near relationship of father and son.

173. **As needful ... duty?** as being a thing which the love we all bear to him renders necessary, and one to which our loyal

duty makes becoming in us; **loves**, "the plural is frequently used by Shakespeare and writers of the 16th and 17th centuries when designating an attribute common to many, in cases where it would be now considered a solecism" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

174. **I pray**, I strongly urge you.

175. **Where we ... conveniently**, where conveniently for our purpose we may make sure of finding him.

Scene II.

1. **Hamlet, our dear brother's**, a many-worded term, as though hyphened together.

2. **green**, fresh in our minds,

3. **To bear ... grief**, to show by the way in which we carried our hearts that they were borne down by a load of sorrow. The figure is from the carriage of the body when bearing a burden.

3, 4. **and our whole ... woe**, and that it befitted our subjects universally to wear the look of woe which the brow wears when contracted with physical pain; for **brow of woe**, = mourning brow, the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare *Lear*, i. 4. 306, "brow of youth" = youthful brow; *M. V.* ii. 8. 42, "mind of love" = loving mind; i. *H. IV.* iv. 3. 83, "brow of justice."

discretion, politic consideration: **nature**, natural inclination.

That we ... ourselves, that we, while thinking of him, do ... ch a way as wisdom dictates, and at the same time with a ... tion of what is for our own well-being.

... **r sometime sister**, she who was formerly our sister; see ... i. 1. 49.

imperial ... state, the king appears to speak as if the ... n of Denmark became a jointure of the queen on the death ... former husband: but perhaps he merely means that her ... of sovereignty were equal with his own. **jointress**, the ... or of a jointure, short for 'jointuress.'

a defeated joy, a joy robbed of its completeness; from F. ... ire, to undo; cp. *Sonn.* lxi. 11, "Mine own true love that doth my rest *defeat*."

11. **With an auspicious ... eye**, with one eye bright with joy, while from the other tears were falling. Steevens compares *W. T.* v. 2. 80, "She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled"; cp. also for **dropping**, *R. A.* iii. 1. 19, "O earth, I will befriend thee with more rain ... the summer's drought I'll *drop* upon thee still"; **auspicious**, literally that which has to do with the watching of

birds for the purpose of augury (from Lat. *avis*, a bird, and *spicere*, to look into), then used especially of favourable omens.

12. **With mirth .. marriage**, if the king is to be taken as speaking literally, this must mean qualifying the sorrow felt at his brother's funeral with an admixture of joy at the prospect of marrying his widow, and equally qualifying the mirth at that wedding by sad remembrance of his brother's death; **dirge**, a funeral lament; from Lat. *dirige*, direct thou, the first word in the Psalm (v. 8) used by Catholics at the burial of the dead, "*Dirige, Dominus meus, in conspectu tuo vitam meam*," "Guide, O Lord, my life in Thy sight." Moberly remarks, "The studied antitheses repeated over and over in this speech give it a very artificial appearance. The king's politic and parliamentary reasons for marrying the queen remind us of the similar motives which an eminent writer supposes to have influenced Henry VIII. in his prompt re-marriages."

13. **In equal ... dole**,—equally balancing joy and grief, not giving to either advantage over the other; for **dole**, sorrow, lamentation, cp. *A. Y. L.* i. 2. 139, "making such pitiful *dole* over them that all the beholders take his part with weeping."

14. **to wife**, for wife, as wife; see Abb. § 189.

14-6. **nor have we ... along**, nor have I in coming to a decision in the matter acted without consulting you who, in a matter personal to myself, were likely to show more dispassionate judgement, for I may say that from first to last you have given your fullest adherence to my action.

16. **For all, our thanks**, for everything you have done you have my gratitude.

17. **Now follows ... Fortinbras**, next I must mention that, etc. Walker would read 'Now follows that you know': *i.e.* that which you already know, an alteration already suggested by Theobald with a comma only after **know**.

18. **Holding ... worth**, having but a contemptuous idea of my capacity.

19. **by**, in consequence of.

20. **state**, kingdom: **disjoint**, cp. below, i. 5. 188, "The time is out of joint"; *Macb.* iii. 2. 16, "But let the *frame* of things *disjoint*"; and for examples of the omission of *-ed* in participles of verbs ending in *te*, *t*, and *d*, see Abb. § 342: **out of frame**, dislocated, shaken out of its proper form; cp. *L. L. L.* iii. 1. 193, "like a German clock, Still a-repairing, ever *out of frame*."

21. **Colleagued ... advantage**, having for his only confederate this advantage which he fondly dreams he will derive from the unsettled state of our kingdom.

22, 3. **He hath ... lands**, has persistently pestered me with

messages the purport of which was that I should surrender, etc.; the distance of the nominative **Fortinbras** (l. 17) accounts for the pronoun **he**; for **message**, as a plural, see Abb. § 471. Possibly **importing** here = importuning as Abb. (Introd. p. xvi.) takes it, and as *important* and *importance* are used by Shakespeare.

24. **with . law**, in full accordance with the legal agreement entered into by the two parties.

25. **So much for him**, of him and his acts I need say no more.

26. **this time of meeting**, this occasion for which we have called you together.

27. **here**, *sc.* in the papers he holds in his hand; **writ**, for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 343.

28. **Norway**. see note on i. 1. 48.

29. **bed-rid**, from "A.S. *bed. ida*, *beddrida*, .. A.S. *bed*, a bed, and *ridda*, a knight, a rider; thus the sense is a bed-rider, a sarcastic term for a disabled man"...(Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **scarcely hears**, has hardly any knowledge of.

30, 1. **to suppress ... herein**, calling upon him to put a stop to his nephew's further proceeding in this matter; **gait**, "a particular use of the M. E. *gate*, a way ... It is clear that the word was thus used, because popularly connected with the verb *to go*; at the same time, the word is not really *derived* from that verb, but from the verb *to get* "... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **levies**, here, as in ii. 2. 62, of the act of levying troops; in *Cymb.* iii. 7. 13, of the troops raised.

32. **lists**, literally catalogues, hence numbers: **proportions**, quotas, contingents, as in *H. V.* i. 2. 204, "Therefore let our *proportions* for these wars Be soon collected."

33. **Out of his subject**, from among his subjects; for **subject**, used collectively, cp. i. 1. 72.

35. **For bearers**, as bearers.

36-8. **Giving ... allow**, allowing you no further authority to treat with the king than the limits of these conditions, herein expressly stated, permit; for **scope**, cp. *Lear*, i. 4. 314, "But let his disposition have that *scope* That dotage gives it." For the confusion of proximity, owing to the words intervening between the nominative and the verb, see Abb. § 412; and for the tenour of the words, cp. *K. J.* i. 1. 22, "Then take my king's defiance from my mouth, The *furthest limit of my embassy*."

39. **let your ... duty**, let the haste you make in discharging your mission call for our approval of your duteous behaviour.

41. **nothing**, in no way; like 'something,' frequently used by Shakespeare in an adverbial sense.

42. **what's ... you**? what have you to tell us about yourself?

43. **You told ... suit**, you lately spoke to us about some request you had to prefer.

44. **speak of reason**, mention any reasonable request.

45. **lose your voice**, waste your words, speak in vain.

45, 6. **what wouldst ... asking?** you cannot possibly make any request of us which we would not grant of our own free will, if we only knew what its nature was.

47-9. **The head ... father**, the head and heart, the hand and mouth, do not work together in more complete sympathy than do your father and myself. Delius points out that **native** expresses a connection that is congenital; **instrumental**, one that is mechanical; for **native**, = allied by nature, cp. *A. W.* i. 1. 238, "To join like likes, and kiss like *native* things." Also for a similar line of thought, see the fable of the belly and the bodily members, *Cor.* i. 1. 99, etc.

51. **Your leave and favour**, your gracious permission; a hendiadys.

52. **From whence**, strictly speaking, redundant; the suffix *-ce*, = *-es*, originally a genitive case-ending, meaning 'from.' The word is further noticeable in that *when* is used of time, not place, though the word has in itself no reference to either time or place, it being, according to Skeat (who compares Lat. *quum*, when, from *quis*, who), originally a case of the interrogative pronoun.

53. **To show ... coronation**, to show myself a loyal subject by attending your coronation.

54 **done**, being performed.

56. **And bow .. pardon**, and submit themselves to your gracious permission; asking, as it were, to be excused for preferring France to the king's court; **pardon**, as in iv. 7. 46, and *A. C.* iii. 6. 60, "whereon I begg'd His *pardon* for return," meaning little more than leave, permission.

58. **wrung ... leave**, extorted from me a permission reluctantly granted.

59. **By laboursome petition**, by strenuous and persistent begging; **laboursome**, used again in *Cymb.* iii 4. 167, "Your *laboursome* and dainty trims," but in a slightly different sense, trims over which much labour had been spent.

60. **Upon his will ... consent**, with the utmost reluctance I assented to the determination he had so strongly formed; there is an allusion to putting a seal to a will, testament, in order to give it validity, and a play upon the two meanings of **will**.

62. **Take ... hour,** choose the time that may best suit you for your departure: **time be thine,** consider yourself at liberty to remain away as long as you may think fit.

63. **And thy .. will!** and may that time be spent by you to the best purpose and in the way most agreeable to you!

64. **cousin,** used in Shakespeare's time of almost any relationship not in the first degree: **son,** stepson, the king having married his mother.

65. **A little ... kind,** the explanation of this line depends in the first place upon whether the words refer to himself or to the king, and secondly upon whether **kind** means 'kindly,' 'well-disposed,' or 'of the same nature.' Malone, taking the former view, explains, "I am a little more than thy kinsman (for I am thy stepson), and am somewhat less than kind to thee (for I hate thee, as being the person who has incestuously married my mother)." Grant White, following Steevens, and taking the latter view, explains, "In marrying my mother, you have made yourself something more than my kinsman, and, at the same time, have shown yourself unworthy of our race, our kind." To me Grant White's explanation seems undoubtedly the right one. This jingle between 'kin' and 'kind' was a common one.

66. **that the clouds ... you,** that you are still in such a gloomy mood.

67. **too much i' the sun,** probably best explained by reference to the old proverb, quoted by Johnson, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun," *i.e.* passing from a good state into one less favourable. The proverb is quoted in *Lear*, ii. 2. 168, and Dyce and Caldecott give examples of its use from Heywood to Swift. Some commentators have supposed a pun on 'sun' and 'son,' with an allusion to the king's words in l. 64, and with the meaning that Hamlet had too much of the son and successor about him without possession of his rights.

68. **nighted colour,** dark frame of mind; for the general rule that participles formed from an adjective mean 'made of (the adjective),' and derived from a noun, mean 'endowed with, or like (the noun),' see Abb. § 294.

69. **like a friend,** in a friendly way, as the eye of a friend would look: **Denmark,** *i.e.* the king.

70, 1. **Do not ... dust,** do not for all time go about with your eyes cast upon the ground as if you were looking for your father laid in the earth; for **vailed,** cp. *M. V.* i. 1. 28, "*Vailing* her high-top lower than her ribs."

72. **'tis common,** the occurrence of death is something that all equally share; **all that lives,** everything that has life.

73. **nature**, this temporary existence in the natural world.

75. **Why seems ... thee?** why do you behave as though it were something special to you?

78. **Nor customary ... black**, nor the usual sombre dress of mourners; **solemn**, literally yearly, occurring annually like a religious rite.

79. **Nor windy ... breath**, nor the forced sighs of insincere grief; **windy**, used in the contemptuous sense of that which has nothing real in it: so, of words, *R. III.* iv. 4. 127, "*Windy* attorneys to their client woes."

80. **the fruitful ... eye**, the tears always ready to fall so copiously; cp. *A. C.* ii. 5. 24, "Ram thou thy *fruitful* tidings in mine ears."

81. **'haviour**, for examples of dropped prefixes, see Abb. § 460.

82. **modes**, methods of displaying grief externally: **shapes**, external semblances.

85. **passeth show**, goes beyond, is incapable of being represented by, any outward demonstration.

86. **trappings**, ornamental appendages; cp. *T. N.* v. 1. 10, "*Duke.* Belong you to the Lady Olivia, friends? *Clown.* Ay, sir; we are some of her *trappings*"; originally, and in a literal sense always, applied to the ornaments of a horse, such as plates of metal, handsome cloths, etc. Malone compares *R. II.* iv. 1. 295-8.

87. **commendable**, probably with the accent on the first syllable, as in *Cor.* iv. 7. 51, though Abbott (§ 490), in order to avoid the Alexandrine, scans the line "'Tis sweet and | comménd|able in | your nat|ure, Hamlet."

88. **To give**, we should now say 'to pay.'

89. **you must know**, you must bear in mind.

90. **That father . . bound**, that father who was lost by your father, lost his father; and the survivor in each case was bound, etc. For the ellipsis in **bound**, the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare iii. 3. 62.

91. **In filial obligation**, by the duty he owed as a son

92. **obsequious sorrow**, sorrow usual to show at the funeral of some one dear; cp. *T. A.* v. 3. 152, "To shed *obsequious* tears upon this trunk"; and for the substantive in the same sense, *R. J.* v. 3. 16, "The *obsequies* that I for thee will keep Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep"; *obsequies*, Lat. *obsequiæ*, funeral rites, literally followings after (a dead body); **persever**, with the accent on the second syllable, as always in Shakespeare.

93. **condolement**, sorrow for the dead; nowadays we use the

verb 'condole' only in the sense of expressing sympathy in sorrow, but in Elizabethan English it is often used as = mourn.

94. **impious**, in not showing resignation to the divine will.

95. **incorrect to heaven**, which refuses to bow to the correction, chastisement of heaven, as shown in the bereavement.

96. **unfortified**, not fortified by the consolations of religion: **impatient**, rebellious against the sufferings which it should bear with due submission.

97. **simple**, foolish, ignorant; **unschool'd**, that has not learnt the lessons which a wise man would lay to heart.

98. **what**, that which; **must be**, must happen.

99. **As any .. sense**, as anything the most palpable to sense; for instances of the transposition of adjectival phrases, see Abb. § 419 *a*. Francke compares *Cymb.* i. 4. 65, "*any the rarest* of our ladies in France"; *H. VIII.* ii. 4. 48, "was reckon'd *one The wisest* prince that there had reigned."

100. **peevish**, childishly querulous; fretful.

101. **Take it to heart**, cherish it as a wrong done to us: **to heaven**, towards, against, heaven.

102. **nature**, that organization to which we belong, are a part of.

103. **To reason most absurd**, showing an utter deafness to the voice of reason; **absurd**, from Lat. *ab*, from, and *surdus*, deaf; for 'who,' personifying an irrational antecedent, see Abb. § 264.

104. **still**, ever, constantly.

105. **till he**, up to the time of him; **till**, here a preposition; for **he**, = him, see Abb. § 206.

106. **throw to earth**, completely cast from you.

107. **unprevailing**, unavailing; Malone quotes Dryden, *Essay on Dramatic Literature*, "He may often *prevail* himself of the same advantages in English." Cp. also *R. J.* iii. 3. 60, "It helps not, it *prevails* not"; *H. V.* iii. 2. 16, "If wishes should *prevail* with me."

108, 9. **for let ... throne**, for I call all men to witness my declaration that I regard you as next in succession to the throne. Succession to the throne of Denmark seems to have been elective, though, as appears from the last scene of the play, the recommendation of the previous occupant went for something in the election, and here the king is in effect pronouncing such recommendation beforehand.

110. **with no ... love**, with a love as full of generous feeling.

111. **dearest**, fondly loving and beloved.

112. **Do I impart toward you**, Delius is probably right in thinking that Shakespeare having forgotten, owing to the intermediate clause, that he had written *with* **no less**, intended **no less nobility of love** to be the object of **impart**; **For your intent**, as regards, etc.

113. **to school**, not necessarily in the sense in which we should now use the phrase, Wittenberg being a university. Of course, the mention of Wittenberg is an anachronism, the university not having been founded till A.D. 1502. On the question of Hamlet's age, see Introduction.

114. **retrograde**, opposed to: literally going back from; an astrological term. Tschischwitz says that when planets were retrograde, going away from the earth's orbit, they were, under certain circumstances, supposed to be hostile to human plans.

115. **bend you**, incline your mind.

116. **in the cheer .. eye**, cheered and comforted by our gracious looks; **cheer**, properly the face, look, as in *M. N. D.* iii. 2. 96, "pale of *cheer*," from O. F. *chere*, *chiere*, the face, look.

117. **chiefest**, highest in rank and importance: **cousin**, in the vocative case.

118. **lose**, throw them away.

120. **I shall ... best**, I promise that I will to the best of my ability; **shall**, see Abb. § 315.

121, **Why, 'tis ... reply**, well, you could not have answered us in more affectionate and gracious terms.

122. **as ourself**, *i.e.* enjoying the same privileges and honours.

123. **accord**, promise in harmony with our wishes.

124. **Sits ... heart**, nestles close to my heart, and smiles upon it; *i.e.* is very dear to my heart, and cheers it by its presence. There is the twofold idea of an object being hugged to the heart, and of that object smiling upon the heart that thus gives it welcome: **in grace whereof**, and in order to mark my gratitude by doing honour to your concession; **grace**, honour, as in *M. N. D.* iv. 1. 139, "Came here in *grace* of our solemnity," is probably here used with a reference also to the saying of grace after meals for blessings bestowed.

125. **jocund health**, joyous toasts to the health of some person: **Denmark**, I, the king of Denmark.

126. **But the great ... tell**, shall be drunk without the cannon announcing it to, etc.

127. **rouse**, "a drinking-bout ... — Swed. *rus*, a drunken fit ... That we got the word from *Denmark* is shown by a curious

quotation in Todd's Johnson: 'Thou noblest drunkard Bacchus, teach me how to take the Danish *rowza*'; Brand's Pop. Antiq. ii. 228" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **bruit again**, re-echo with loud report; **bruit**, F. *bruit*, a great noise, *bruire* (verb).

128. **Re-speaking earthly thunder**, the skies echoing the report of the cannon as with heavenly thunder.

129. **this ... flesh**, Moberly remarks, "The base affinities of our nature are always present to Hamlet's mind. Here he thinks of the body as hiding from us the freshness, life, and nobleness of God's creation"...

130. **resolve**, dissolve; but usually in this sense with the idea of dissolving back into the original constituents. Cp. *Tim.* iv. 3. 442, "The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge *resolves* The moon into salt tears."

132. **His canon 'gainst self-slaughter**, his ordinance forbidding suicide; an ordinance not laid down in Scripture except in the general one against murder; **canon**, from Gk. κανών, a straight rod, a rule in the sense of a carpenter's rule, hence a rule, a standard of right.

133. **stale**, vapid; **flat**, tasteless, as liquor becomes after standing uncovered for some time.

134. **uses**, manners, ways, doings; cp. *Oth.* iv. 3. 105, "heaven me such *uses* send, Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!"

135, 6. **'tis an ... seed**, the world seems to me as a garden in which no care is taken to hoe up the weeds, and in which the plants are left to run to seed (and so become worthless) instead of having their exuberant growth checked by pruning. Cp. *R. II.* iii. 4. 34-66, where a garden is likened to a commonwealth.

136. **things ... nature**, things which for want of proper attention have become rank and gross in nature.

137. **merely**, completely; "*Merely* (from the Latin *merus* and *mere*) means purely, only. It separates that which it designates or qualifies from everything else. But in so doing the chief or most emphatic reference may be made either to that which is included, or to that which is excluded. In modern English it is always to the latter; by 'merely upon myself' [*J. C.* i. 2. 39] we should now mean, upon nothing else except myself; the *nothing else* is that which makes the *merely* prominent. In Shakespeare's day the other reference was the more common, that namely to what was included; and 'merely upon myself' meant upon myself altogether, or without regard to anything else. *Myself* was that which the *merely* made prominent. So when Hamlet speaking of the world, says, 'Things rank and gross in nature possess it *merely*,' he by the *merely* brings the *possession* before

the mind and characterizes it as complete and absolute; but by the same term now the prominence would be given to something else from which the possession might be conceived to be separable; 'possess it merely would mean have nothing beyond simply the possession of it (have, it might be, no right to it, or no enjoyment of it). It is not necessary that that which is included, though thus emphasized, should therefore be more *definitely* conceived than that with which it is contrasted" .. (Craik, *Eng. of Shakespeare*, § 45). **That it .. this!** to think that matters should have come to such a scandalous pitch! what a horrible idea!'

138. **But,** only.

139. **to this,** when compared to the present king.

140. **Hyperion to a satyr,** what the god of day is to a creature half goat, half man. The penultimate in **Hyperion** is long in Greek, but English poets from Spenser to modern times have disregarded this fact.

141. **That he ... beteem,** that he would not allow; Skeat (*Ety. Dict. s.v. teem*) says that **beteem** here and in *M. N. D.* i. 1. 131, "means to make or consider fitting, hence to permit, allow. ... In Golding's translation of Ovid Metamorphoses ... we have 'could he not *beteeme* = he did not think fit, would not deign ... Spenser uses it still more loosely: 'So woulde I .., *Beteeme* to you this sword' = permit, grant, allow you the use of this sword; F. Q. ii. 8. 19 ... The word [teem] is hardly to be traced in E., but we find the related A.S. suffix *-téme, -tyme* with the notion of fitting or suitable, as in *luf-téme,* pleasant, acceptable"...

142. **Visit,** for the omission of *to* before the infinitive, see Abb. § 349.

143. **Must I remember?** can I not put such thoughts out of my head? must they ever be present there? **hang on him,** cling to him in fond embrace.

144, 5, **As if ... on,** as if her loving desire had been made more eager by its mere satisfaction; been strengthened by the food of love it had enjoyed.

146. **Let me ... on 't,** oh, that I could forget it! **Frailty ... woman,** if we wished to give frailty a descriptive name, no better one could be chosen than 'woman.'

147. **A little month,** a short month; scarcely a month: **or ere,** a reduplication, or, in this phrase, = before, from A.S. *ær,* ere: **shoes,** Ingleby would read 'shows.'

148. **follow'd,** *sc.* to the grave.

149. **Niobe,** daughter of Tantalus, and wife of Amphion. Proud of the number of her children, she boasted her superiority over Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis, who, indignant at the insult, slew all her children, she herself, according to one tradi-

tion, being changed by Zeus at her own request into a stone, which during the summer always shed tears: **all tears**, a very impersonation of grief.

150. **that wants ... reason**, that lacks the power of reasoning, the reasoning faculty; cp. *T. C.* ii. 2. 116, "So madly hot that no *discourse of reason* Can qualify the same?"; and below, iv. 4. 36.

152. **but no more .. father**, but, though so closely akin in blood, no more akin in disposition to, etc.

154. **Ere yet . tears**, even before the salt tears which, with such intention in her mind, were a mere profanation of sorrow, etc.

155. **Had left ... eyes**, had ceased to flush her eyes with "eye-offending brine" (*T. N.* i. 1. 30); **flushing** is here the verbal, and the verb is still used transitively in such expressions as 'to *flush* the deck,' 'to *flush* the sewers,' meaning to cleanse by dashing water upon or through; for **galled**, cp. below, iii. 2. 235; the verb means to rub a sore place.

156. **to post**, to hurry at full speed; from *post*, a runner, messenger.

157. **With such dexterity**, so quickly and cleverly. There seems to be here the idea of that combined nimbleness and ingenuity which is essential to success in tricks performed by sleight of hand; not only did she swiftly transfer her affections from one brother to the other, but she showed in doing so a cunning regard to her own interests: **incestuous**, originally meaning nothing more than unchaste, but used specially of alliances within the forbidden degrees of relationship.

158. **nor it cannot**, the emphatic double negative, frequent in Shakespeare.

160. **Hail**, literally health, A.S. *hael*, health; a common salutation.

161. **or do ... myself**? or am I making some mistake in fancying you to be Horatio?

162. **poor**, humble.

163. **I'll change ... you**, probably exchange that name with you, calling you friend and expecting you to call me so in return, rather than, as Johnson explains, "I'll be your servant, and you shall be my friend."

164. **what .. Wittenberg**? what are you doing here away from Wittenberg (where you ought to be)?

167. **Good even, sir**, Grant White, the Camb. Edd., and Hudson, take this as addressed to Bernardo.

168. **But what ... Wittenberg**, but tell me truly what has brought you all the way from Wittenberg.

169. **A truant disposition**, an idle, roving nature; F. *truand*, rascally, roguish: **good my lord**, for the transposition of the pronominal adjective, see Abb. § 13.

170. **hear ... so**, stand by and hear your enemy say so without defending you against his charge.

171. **that**, such; see Abb. § 277.

172, 3. **To make ... yourself**, as to make it believe your own report when it is one defaming yourself.

175. **We 'll teach ... depart**, if we cannot do anything else, we will at all events teach, etc. See note on i. 4. 19.

179. **hard upon**, closely after.

180. **Thrift, thrift**, pretending to excuse the unseemly haste of the marriage, Hamlet says, that was but economy, nothing else: **the funeral baked meats**, the dishes cooked for the funeral ceremony; the custom of entertaining the relations and friends of the deceased persons after the funeral survived to quite recent times. Douce traces the custom to the *cena feralis* of the Romans, at which milk, honey, wine, etc., were offered to the spirit of the dead person.

181. **Did coldly ... tables**, served, when cold, for the wedding feast; with a play upon **coldly**.

182. **Would I ... heaven**, I would rather have met my worst enemy in heaven (instead of his being in hell where I should wish him to be); **dearest foe**, "'dear' is used of whatever touches us nearly either in love or hate, joy or sorrow"... (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

183. **Or ever**, before ever; **ever** emphasizing the wish.

185. **in my mind's eye**, Steevens compares *Lucr.* 1426, "Was left unseen, save to *the eye of mind*."

186. **goodly**, *sc.* in appearance; fine-looking.

187, 8. **He was ... again**, he was a man whose equal, looking at him in all his characteristics, I shall never see again; **take him**, if one regards him; **for all in all**, for everything about him in every respect; an emphatic way of speaking = in his entirety.

190. **Saw? who?** both words emphatic; what do you mean by saying you *saw* him? and whom do you mean by *him?* Many editors read 'Saw who?', and 'who' for 'whom' is frequently used by Shakespeare.

192, 3. **Season ... ear**, let your wonder be mixed with, qualified by, attention for a time; for **season**, cp. ii. 1. 28, below; **admiration**, always used by Shakespeare either as 'wonder' simply, or as 'wonder mingled with veneration,' and so more in accordance with its original sense; **attent**, attentive; not elsewhere in Shakespeare: **deliver**, relate.

194. **Upon ... gentlemen,** resting upon the evidence of these gentlemen which will bear out what I have to say.

197. **on their watch,** while keeping their watch.

198. **In the dead ... the night,** in the silent vacancy of midnight; **vast,** "applied to the darkness of midnight in which the prospect is not bounded in by distinct objects" (Schmidt); cp. *Temp.* i. 2. 327, "that *vast* of night." Malone sees a pun here upon **vast,** or *waste*, as the folios read, and *waist*, comparing Marston's *Malcontent*, ii. 3. 153, "'Tis now about the *waist* of midnight"; but it is much more probable that Marston, who in that play repeatedly burlesques or parodies passages in Hamlet, should have seized upon this expression in order to pun upon it.

200. **Armed at point exactly,** in armour complete to the smallest particular; the folios read 'at all points,' as in *R. II.* i. 3. 2; in *Lear*, i. 4. 347, "to let him keep *at point* a hundred knights," and *Macb.* iv. 3. 135, "with ten thousand warlike men Already *at a point*," the meaning is 'in complete readiness'; **cap-a-pe,** from head to foot; F. *à pied*, *à* being the preposition = to.

202. **Goes ... them,** passes in front of them in slow and stately manner; **slow and stately,** adverbs.

204. **Within ... length,** less than the length of his truncheon away from them; **truncheon,** short staff, a symbol of kingly (or other) office; what in *R. II.* i. 3. 118, is called the king's 'warder'; **whilst,** the genitive case of *while*, time, used adverbially, with an excrescent *t*, as in *amongst*, *amidst*.

204, 5. **distill'd .. fear,** dissolved almost into a jelly by the action of fear upon them; *i.e.* with beads of sweat falling from their foreheads, like jelly melting; unless there is a reference to the tremulous nature of jelly, and its being allowed to drip through a flannel bag when being made; cp. *T. A.* iii. 1. 17, "with rain That shall *distill* from these two ancient urns," *i.e.* his eyes; **act,** cp. *Oth.* iii. 3. 328, "poisons Which ... with a little *act* upon the blood, Burn like the mines of sulphur."

207. **dreadful,** terror-stricken; **impart they did,** "this inversion gives formality and solemnity to the speaker's words" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

209-11. **Where, ... comes,** and to that spot (*sc.* where we were keeping watch) the apparition comes at the very time of night and in the very shape described by them, every particular of their narrative being substantiated.

212. **These hands ... like,** these two hands of mine (holding them up) being not more like each other than was the figure like your father.

214. **Did you . . it?** you surely did not allow it to pass without questioning it? Steevens has a long note to show, what seems apparent enough, that **speak** not **you** is the emphatic word.

216. **it head**, the first quarto gives '*his* head'; **it**, an early provincial form, = its, occurs in the first folio in fourteen passages; in some of these it is used either in imitation of the language of children, or in a mocking, derisive sense, but in others no such idea is present. Rolfe remarks, "The simple fact is, that Shakespeare wrote in the early part of that transitional period when *its* was beginning to displace *his* and *her* as the possessive of *it*, and that just at that time the form *it* and *it's* were more common than *its*, though this last was occasionally used even before the end of the 16th century."

216, 7. **and did ... speak**, and prepared to speak, as shown by the moving of its lips, made as though it would speak; **address**, made ready, ultimately from Lat. *directus*, straight; for **motion**, cp. i. *H. IV.* ii. 3. 63, "And in thy face strange *motions* (*i.e.* contortions) have appeared, Such as we see when men restrain their breath On some great sudden hest"; **like . . speak**, *i.e.* just as it would do if it were about to speak ('if' being implied in the subjunctive), would now be accounted a vulgarism.

218. **even then**, at that very instant; on the difference of emphasis in the use of *even*, between Elizabethan and modern English, see Abb. § 38.

219. **shrunk**, *i.e.* into thin air.

221. **As I do live**, as surely as I live.

222. **writ ... duty**, laid down among the items of our duty, as though they had a scroll with the different particulars enumerated; for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 343.

224. **Indeed ... me**, assuredly this troubles me; literally, assuredly this does not do anything except trouble me.

226. **Arm'd, say you?** said with reference to the ghost.

228. **beaver**, "the lower portion of the face-guard of a helmet, when worn with a visor; but occasionally serving the purposes of both. M.E. *bavicre*, from O.F. *bavière*, originally a child's bib, f. *bave*, saliva" (Murray, *Eng. Dict.*).

230. **A countenance ... anger**, the expression of his features was that of sorrow rather than anger.

233. **constantly**, persistently, without taking them off our faces.

234. **amazed**, bewildered; **a-**, A.S. intensive prefix.

238. **grizzled,** of greyish colour; F. *gris,* grey: **no?** seems to be said by Hamlet on Horatio shaking his head in dissent.

240. **A sable silver'd,** a black beard with threads of silver in it; cp. *Sonn.* xii. 4, "And *sable* curls all *silver'd* o'er with white"; and in proof that Shakespeare used **sable** for black, cp. below, ii. 2. 428, "he whose *sable* arms *Black* as his purpose." *Sable,* an animal of the weasel kind, the most highly prized fur of which is black; so *sable* in blazonry means black.

242. **assume ... person,** present itself in the form of my father; **assume,** take upon it, but without any idea of its doing so without right.

243, 4. **though hell ... peace,** though hell, by opening at my feet, should endeavour to deter me from speaking. Staunton thinks that **gape** perhaps means *yell, howl, roar.*

246. **Let it . . still,** let it be a thing about which you find it still possible to keep silence; **tenable,** not elsewhere used by Shakespeare.

247. **hap,** happen.

248. **Give it . tongue,** take it well into your minds, let it impress itself firmly upon your minds, but do not utter a word about it.

249. **requite,** "The word ought rather to be *requit* ... But just as *quite* occurs as a variant of *quit,* so *requite* is put for *requit*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **your loves,** the proofs you may give of your love; see note on i. 1. 173.

251. **Our duty to your honour,** we assure your honour (used as a title) of our loyal obedience.

252. **Your loves,** *i.e.* it is your affection, not your duty, that I desire, just as it is affection that I feel towards you.

253. **in arms**! not merely, or so much, that the ghost appears clad in armour, but that it has risen to avenge some injury: **all is not well,** some wrong has evidently been perpetrated. Hitherto Hamlet, though vigorously condemning his mother's haste in re-marrying, especially as her choice is a so unworthy one, and pouring contempt upon his uncle, has had no suspicion of foul play.

254. **doubt,** suspect.

255. **sit still,** strive to be composed.

255, 6. **foul deeds ... eyes,** foul deeds will reveal themselves to men's eyes, however thoroughly they may appear to be hidden; cp. *Macb.* iii. 4. 123-6, "Stones have been known to move and trees to speak; Augurs and understood relations have By magot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth The secret'st man of blood." Corson doubts whether **to men's eyes** should be connected with **rise** or with **o'erwhelm them.**

SCENE III.

Of this scene Coleridge remarks, "This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence of our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop."

1. **necessaries**, luggage or baggage, as we should say: **embark'd**, put on board the vessel.

2. **as the ... benefit**, according as (whenever) from time to time the winds serve, are in a quarter favourable to the sailing of a vessel. Cp. *Cymb.* iv. 2. 342, "*Lucius.* When expect you them? *Captain.* With the next *benefit of the wind.*"

3. **And convoy is assistant**, and the means of conveying a letter is at hand; *i.e.* when there is both a favourable wind and a vessel sailing in that direction; for **convoy** cp. *T. C.* i. 1. 107, "this sailing Pandar, Our doubtful hope, our *convoy* and our bark": **do not sleep**, do not be too lazy to write.

5. **For Hamlet ... favour**, as for Hamlet and the admiration which he carelessly offers you.

6. **Hold it a fashion**, regard it as nothing more than a passing fancy, a thing sure to change as quickly as fashion in dress: **a toy in blood**, a mere caprice of impulse; for **toy**, cp. i. 4. 75, and *Oth.* iii. 4. 156, "And no conception nor no jealous *toy* Concerning you"; for **blood**, cp. *M. A.* ii. 1. 187, "beauty is a witch Against whose charms faith melteth into *blood.*"

7. **A violet ... nature**, as a violet appearing in the early spring (*i.e.* before its proper season); **primy**, belonging to the prime, early days of the year; not elsewhere found in Shakespeare, though we have *prime* = spring, *Lucr.* 332, *Sonn.* xcvii. 2.

8. **Forward, not permanent**, precocious, but enduring for a short season only.

9. **The perfume ... minute**, the perfume which a minute affords and which with the minute passes away; merely an amplification of the words **sweet, not lasting.**

10. **No more but so?** nothing more than that?

11-4. **For nature ... withal**, for a man's nature, when in a state of growth, does not show its expansion merely in physical strength and size; but as the body fills out, the mind and soul also expand in the service they inwardly perform, extending their operations to a much wider sphere. In other words, Hamlet as yet is a mere youth, and the scope of his thoughts being but narrow, he finds pleasure in making love to you; but, as he grows older, larger interests will occupy his mind, and he will

forget all about you: **thews**, sinews, strength, from A.S. *théaw*, habit, custom, behaviour ... the base is *thau-*, evidently from the Teut. base THU, to be strong" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*); **temple**, body; cp. *Macb.* ii. 3. 73, "murder hath broke ope The Lord's anointed *temple*." Caldecott points out that the word is never so used but on great occasions.

14. **Perhaps ... now**, Laertes does not mean to charge Hamlet with insincerity; his love may be real enough, he says, but it will quickly change.

15, 6. **And now ... will**, and at present no evil thought or crafty design stains the essential goodness of his intentions towards you; **cautel**, used here and in the *Lover's Complaint*, 303, only, though *cautelous* occurs in *Cor.* iv. 1. 33, *J. C.* ii. 1. 129, with the same bad sense; the Lat. *cautela*, a term of Roman law, from which the word ultimately comes, meant nothing more than a precaution, the acquired invidiousness being probably due to the subtlety of such precautions.

16, 7. **but you ... own**, but what you have to fear is that, his position in the state being taken into consideration, he is not at liberty to follow his own inclinations.

18. **For he ... birth**, for he must submit himself to the conditions of his birth; cp. *Cymb.* ii. 3. 121-6, "And though it be allow'd in meaner parties ... to knit their souls . in self-figur'd knot; Yet you are curbed from that enlargement by The consequence o' the crown."

19, 20. **He may not ... himself**, it is not possible for him, like persons of no consequence, to cut out a path for himself in whatever direction it pleases him; cp. *R II.* ii. 3. 144, "But in this kind to come, in braving arms, Be *his own carver* and cut out his way": **on his choice**, on the choice he makes of a wife.

22-4. **And therefore ... head**, and therefore must that choice be restricted in accordance with the approval and consent of the body politic, whose head he is.

25-7. **It fits ... deed**, it is incumbent upon you, if you are wise, to put faith in his professions of love only so far as he, acting as he must act in the particular conditions of his rank, is able to give effect to his promises.

27, 8. **which is ... withal**, and this freedom of action extends no further than it is in accordance with the general wish of the people; **withal**, when used as a preposition, always in Shakespeare at the end of the sentence.

30. **credent**, readily believing, credulous; used again in this, its more proper, sense in *L. C.* 279, but in *W. T.* i. 2. 142, and *M. M.* iv. 4. 29 (the only other passages in which it occurs) as = credible: **list his songs**, listen to his love songs; cp. *M. N. D.* i. 1. 30-3.

31. **lose your heart**, yield up your love: **chaste treasure**, treasure consisting in chastity.

32. **unmaster'd**, which gets the better of him; at a time when he has no control over his passions.

33. **it**, *sc.* the danger of accepting and returning his love.

34. **And keep ... affection**, do not allow yourself to go so far in meeting his wishes as your love for him would prompt you to do.

35. **Out of ... desire**, out of the dangerous aim of passion.

36, 7. **The chariest ... moon**, even that maiden who is most chary of allowing her beauty to be gazed upon, and who refuses to let it be gazed upon except by the chaste moon, is in doing so quite as prodigal as she ought to be; 'chary' from "A.S. *cearu*, *caru*, care .. thus *chary* is the adjective of *care*, and partakes of its double sense, viz.: (1) sorrow, (2) heedfulness; the former of these being the older sense" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

38. **Virtue ... strokes**, not even the very impersonation of virtue is exempt from the shafts of calumny; cp. *W. T.* ii. 71-4, "these petty brands That calumny doth use—O, I am out—That mercy does, for calumny will sear Virtue itself."

39-42. **The canker ... imminent**, the firstlings of the spring, even before their buds have opened, are blighted by the canker-worm; and youth while in its first bloom, a flower just washed by the dew of early morning, is most in danger of being withered by pernicious blasts; in plain language, Ophelia's youth and innocence render her most liable to danger. **The canker**, a small worm that eats into and destroys the flower; a doublet of *cancer*, literally a crab, the disease being so named from eating into the flesh; **galls**, literally rubs into a sore; **the infants of the spring**, cp. *L. L. L.* i. 1. 101, "Biron is like an envious sneaping frost That bites the first-born *infants of the spring*"; **buttons**, buds, the original sense of the word; **contagious**, pestilential, pernicious, used by Shakespeare of fogs, clouds, darkness, breath, etc.; **blastments**, the abstract for the concrete.

43. **best safety lies in fear**, cp. *Macb.* iii. 5. 32, "And you all know, security (*i.e.* a sense of safety) is mortals' chiefest enemy."

44. **Youth ... near**, "in the absence of any tempter, youth rebels against itself, *i.e.* the passions of youth revolt from the power of self-restraint; there is a traitor in the camp. The substantive verb is similarly omitted in *Cymb.* iv. 4, 23," ["Though Cloten then but young"] (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

45, 6. **I shall ... heart**, I shall keep the purport of this lesson as a safeguard to my heart; I shall lay your lesson to my heart and trust it to act as a watch against all inclinations to weakness;

for **effect**, cp. *Tim.* iii. 5. 97, "'Tis few in words, but spacious in *effect*"; **good, my brother**, see Abb. § 13. Coleridge remarks, "You will observe in Ophelia's short and general answer to the long speech of Laertes the natural carelessness of innocence, which cannot think such a code of cautions and prudences necessary to its own preservation."

47. **ungracious**, who have none of that holiness which they preach to others; cp. *R. II.* ii. 3. 89, "and that word 'grace' In an *ungracious* mouth is but profane."

49-51. **Whiles, ... rede**, while, like a debauchee, bloated with indulgence and heedless of all consequence, you tread the flower-strewn path of wanton folly, and have no thought of following the advice you offer to others. There is a confusion of constructions between Whiles like, etc., you tread the, etc., and reck, etc., and Whiles you act like, etc., who treads, etc. For **puff'd**, cp. *Tim.* iv. 3. 180, "whose self-same mettle, Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is *puff'd*"; for **primrose path**, *Macb.* ii. 3. 17, "I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the *primrose way* to the everlasting bonfire;" *rede*, from A.S. *rǽd*, advice, from which also comes our verb to *read*.

51. **fear me not**, do not be anxious on my account.

53. **A double ... grace**, a double blessing carries with it a double store of happiness; Polonius has already said good-bye (God be with you) once.

54. **Occasion .. leave**, accident is propitious in allowing us a second farewell.

55. **for shame!** *i.e.* you ought to be ashamed of yourself for having delayed so long.

56. **sits ... sail**, is already filling your sails. The sail when blown out looks like a stooping shoulder; cp. *T. C.* ii. 2. 74, "Your breath of full consent *bellied* his sails."

57. **And you ... for**, and your companions are waiting for you: **with thee**! go with you!

59. **character**, inscribe indelibly; cp. *T. G.* ii. 7. 4, "I do conjure thee, Who art the table wherein all my thoughts Are visibly *character'd* and engraved"; in both cases the accent being on the second syllable.

60. **Nor any ... act**, nor translate into action any ill-regulated thought; cp. *Temp.* v. 1. 290, "He is as *disproportion'd* in his manners As in his shape"; *Oth.* iii. 3. 233, "Foul *disproportion*, thoughts unnatural"; **his act**, the act which would be the consequence of the thought; **his** = its.

61. **Be thou ... vulgar**, show yourself ready to be upon intimate terms with your acquaintances, but do not make yourself too

common: cp. i. *H. IV.* iii. 2. 60, etc., where Henry describes how Richard forfeited all respect by making himself too common.

62, 3, **Those friends ... steel**, bind to your very soul those friends you have, and whose adoption by you has been put to the proof. On Pope's reading *hooks*, which has been accepted by Malone and others, the Cl. Pr. Edd. remark that it "makes the figure suggested by 'grapple' the very reverse of what Shakespeare intended; grappling by hooks is the act of an enemy and not of a friend." To this it might be replied that in *H. V.* iii. *Chor.* 18, we have "*Grapple* your minds to sternage of this navy," where, though the idea of grappling-hooks is evidently present, there is no thought of hostility. But the figure is probably taken from hooping together the several staves of a cask, etc., so as to form one compact whole; cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 43-7, "A *hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in*, That the *united vessel* of their blood ... shall *never leak*"; *A. C.* ii. 2. 117, "Yet if I knew What *hoop should hold us stanch*"; **and their adoption tried**, is taken by Delius as a participial parenthesis, and this seems to me the most probable construction, since **hast** is not here an auxiliary verb.

64, 5. **But do not ... comrade**, but do not make yourself incapable of judging between the value of one man and another by accepting the offer of friendship made by anyone with whom you are thrown, however raw and inexperienced in the world he may be. The figure is that of depriving the sense of touch of that delicate sensitiveness which enables a man to distinguish with nicety between different surfaces; cp. v. 1. 65, 6, "The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense"; *Cymb.* i. 6. 106, "join gripes with *hands Made hard* with hourly falsehood."

65-7. **Beware ... thee**, be cautious about engaging in a quarrel, but when once engaged in it, carry matters in such a way that your enemy may in future hesitate about provoking you.

68. **Give .. voice**, be ready to listen to what each man has to say, but be chary of giving your own views.

69. **Take ... judgement**, hear each man's opinion, but forbear to deliver your own decision as to its merits; **censure**, opinion, the wider and original meaning of the word; the present limited sense of *unfavourable* opinion being due to the fact that men are more ready to blame than to praise.

70. **Costly ... buy**, let your dress be as costly as your means will allow.

71. **But not ... gaudy**, but do not let its costliness be shown by its being fanciful, extravagant; let it be rich looking, but not showy.

72. **For the apparel ... man,** for his dress is often an indication of the wearer's character.

73, 4. **And they ... that,** the quartos give 'Are (or 'Or') of a most select and generous, chiefe (or cheefe) in that'; the folios, 'Are of a most select and generous cheff in that.' The reading in the text, which is Rowe's, is adopted by most modern editors, and gives a certain sense, to wit, the men of highest birth and rank in France, priding themselves as they do upon their taste, and addicted as they are to what is rich and noble-looking, show those tendencies in matters of dress more than in anything else; **chief,** as a substantive, in the sense of 'eminence,' 'superiority,' or in that of 'note,' 'estimation,' commends itself to some editors: while Staunton and Ingleby, who retain *of a,* advocate *sheaf,* in the sense of 'clique,' 'class,' 'set,' the figure, according to the former, being borrowed from archery, in the affected phraseology of the Euphuists, according to the latter, partly from archery, partly from husbandry.

76. **For loan ... friend,** for by lending to a friend you often lose both the money itself and the friendship of him to whom you lent it, *sc.* owing to the disputes arising from his not repaying his debt.

77. **dulls ... husbandry,** takes the fine edge off economy; makes a man less thrifty than he would be if he knew that nobody would lend him money; for **husbandry,** cp. *Macb.* ii. 1. 4, "There's *husbandry* in heaven; Their candles are all out," said of a dark night.

79. **as the night,** as surely as the night follows.

81. **season,** give durability; cp. iii. 2. 219. Polonius hopes that his blessing accompanying his advice will make it more lasting than it would otherwise be, just as wood is seasoned by weather.

83. **The time invites you,** *i.e.* it is high time that you should; **tend,** wait for, are expecting, you.

86. **And you ... it,** and unless you say that it is no longer necessary for me to keep it safely, it shall ever remain there.

89. **So please you,** if it so please you (the 'if' being inherent in the subjunctive); a deprecatory form of courtesy.

90. **Marry,** a corruption of the name Mary, *i.e.* the Mother of Christ, in order to avoid the statute against profane swearing: **well bethought,** that is fortunately thought of; I am glad you should have reminded me of the subject.

92. **Given ... you,** spent upon you in private some of the leisure at his disposal; the turn of the sentence seems to show that **private** comprises the *character* of the time, *i.e.* time that Hamlet could call his own, time that was not needed for public purposes,

and also the *manner* in which he spent that time, so privately with Ophelia; for the former sense, cp. *H. V.* iv. 1. 254, "What infinite heart's-ease Must kings neglect, that *private* men enjoy"; for the latter, *M. N. D.* i. 1. 116, "I have some *private* schooling for you both."

93. **Have .. bounteous**, have been more ready to listen to him than you should have been.

94. **as so ... me**, for so I have been informed; not, I think, *suggested* (though the expression is common enough in that sense), the suggestion here being contained in the next line; cp. *M. M.* ii. 2. 133, "Why do you *put these sayings upon me?*"

95. **And that ... caution**, and informed with the object of putting me upon my guard; **And that**, emphasizes the object with which he was told; **must**, cannot help.

96, 7. **You do not ... honour**, you have not such a clear conception as you ought to have of what becomes you as my daughter and as a modest maiden.

98. **What is between you?** What understanding or agreement exists between you? **give ... truth**, tell me without keeping anything back.

99. **tenders**, offers.

101. **green**, raw, inexperienced, foolish; cp. iv. 5. 99.

102. **Unsifted ... circumstance**, one that has not been sifted, tried, by experience of such dangerous matters; cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 1. 194, "We shall be *winnowed* with so rough a wind That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff."

104. **what I should think**, what to believe.

106, 7. **That you .. sterling**, for having taken as current coin these offers which are of no sterling value; **sterling**, first applied to the English penny, said to be so called from the Easterlings or North Germans, who were the first moneyers in England.

107. **Tender ... dearly**, put a higher value upon yourself.

108. **to crack ... phrase**, to ride the phrase to death.

109. **Running it thus**, carrying on the figure of a horse being ridden till, broken-winded, it comes to a stand-still; **Running** is Collier's correction of the reading of the folios, *Roaming*: **tender me a fool**, present me to the world as a fool, show me as a fool; **tender** = hold dear, from F. *tendre* (adj.), Lat. *tener*, tender; **tender** = offer, from F. *tendre* (vb.), Lat. *tendere*, to stretch.

110, 1. **he hath ... fashion**, he has made me urgent proposals of honourable love.

112. **Ay, ... it**, you are quite right to use the word **fashion**, for his proffers of love are but a mere fashion, something that will change quickly enough; cp. above, l. 6: **go to, go to**, nonsense,

nonsense; a common phrase of contemptuous reproof, or, as sometimes, of exhortation.

113, 4. **And hath .. heaven**, and has confirmed his vows by almost every possible appeal to heaven; **countenance**, credit, authority, as in i. *H. IV.* iii. 2. 65, and the verb, ii. *H. IV.* iv. 1. 35.

115. **Ay, ... woodcocks**, yes (said scornfully), snares to catch fools. The woodcock, from its being easily snared, or from its being supposed to have but little brain, was a frequent equivalent for a fool, simpleton.

116. **When the blood burns**, when passion is strong, when the heart is inflamed with passion: **prodigal**, for adjectives used adverbially, see Abb. § 1.

117-20. **these blazes ... fire**, these flashes of passion, which give forth more light than warmth, and of which both the light and the warmth die out even at the moment of their promise, while it is yet in the course of being made, you must not mistake for the fire which burns with steady and comforting warmth; **promise** seems to be used with an allusion to its literal meaning, that which is sent forth, and so perhaps in *J. C.* iv. 2. 24, "like horses hot at hand, Make gallant show and *promise* of their mettle"; **as it is a-making** is an expansion of **Even in their promise**; for the prefix *a-*, = on, in, of, before adjectives and participles used as nouns see Abb. § 24.

121. **Be somewhat ... presence**, show the reserve which becomes a maiden by allowing him fewer opportunities of meeting you; **maiden**, from its position, seems to have this emphatic sense.

122, 3. **Set your .. parley**. put a higher value upon yourself than to consider the entreaties you receive from him as a command, which you cannot disregard, to enter into negotiations; **your**, used objectively, of which you are the object.

124-6. **Believe ... you**, so far, and so far only, let your belief in him go as to bear in mind that he is young, and therefore both eager and changeable, and that to him, as a man, a larger license in making love is allowable than to you in accepting love; do not be over-credulous in trusting him, but remember that his youth and his sex are both to be considered in estimating his professions of love: **in few**, to sum up shortly; for adjectives used as nouns, even in the singular, see Abb. § 5.

127, 8. **for they ... show**, for they are go-betweens that do not show themselves in their true colours; for **investments** = dress, cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 1. 45, "Whose white *investments* figure innocence."

129. **mere ... suits**, nothing but advocates to urge disgraceful proposals; cp. *L. C.* 173, "*vows* were even *brokers* to defiling."

130, 1. **Breathing** ... **beguile**, talking in the language of sanctimonious and hypocritical bawds so as the more effectually to deceive; **bawds**, Theobald's correction of *bonds*, the reading of the quartos and folios which is sometimes defended, though it seems impossible that any of the three words, **Breathing**, **sanctified**, or **pious** should be applied to *bonds*: **This is for all**, to sum up all I have to say.

133. **Have you** ... **leisure**, have you so misused any moment of your leisure; **moment** is the reading of the earlier quartos, *moments*, of the later ones, which many editors, adding the apostrophe, follow. The Cl. Pr. Edd. point out that if **moment** is the right reading, it must be taken as an adjective, as in i. 5. 33, "Lethe wharf." For **slander** = abuse, misuse, Moberly compares "misuse" for "slander," *A. Y. L.* iv. 1. 205.

134. **As to** ... **Hamlet**, though **talk** is here a substantive, **with** is probably due to its being the preposition used with the verb 'to talk,' the two expressions being equivalent to 'give words to, or hold talk with, the Lord Hamlet.'

135. **Look to 't**, take care that you do as I bid you; **it** being used indefinitely: **come your ways**, come along with me where you should go, *i.e.* to your room; **ways** is not here the plural, but the old genitive used adverbially, on your way.

136. **shall**, "When a person speaks of *his own* future actions as inevitable, he often regards them as inevitable only because fixed by himself,"... (Abb. § 318).

SCENE IV.

STAGE DIRECTION. *The platform, sc.* in front of the castle.

1. **shrewdly**, bitterly; *shrewd*, past participle of M. E. *shrewen*, to curse; thence used of anything sharp or bitter, especially of temper or language.

2. **eager**, sharp; O. F. *aigre*, Lat. *acer*, sharp, keen; cp. i. v. 6, and *Sonn.* cxviii. 2, "With *eager* compounds we our palate urge."

3. **lacks of twelve**, is somewhat short of midnight.

6. **held** ... **walk**, has been accustomed to walk; **wont**, "a corruption from *woned*, from the verb '*wonye*,' E. E. 'wunnian,' A.S. 'to dwell'" (Abb. § 5).

STAGE DIRECTION. *A flourish of trumpets*, a sounding of trumpets in a triumphal manner.

8. **doth wake to-night**, sits up feasting; is 'making a night of it,' as the slang expression is; hence a *wake* = a vigil, and then

the feast of the dedication of a church (formerly kept by watching all night): **rouse**, see note on i. 2. 127.

9. **wassail**, revelry; from *wæs hál*, *i.e.* be of good health; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 318, "At wakes and *wassails*, meetings, markets, fairs": **up-spring**, Steevens quotes Chapman's *Alphonsus*, iii., "We Germans have no changes in our dances, An Almain and an *upspring* that is all," to show that this was a German dance, and Eltze further asserts that it was "*the Hupfauf*," the last and consequently the wildest dance of the old German merry-makings, though Schmidt speaks of that dance as "apocryphal"; others explain the word as 'upstart,' referring it to the king, and with this explanation the words **swaggering** and **reels** seem better to agree, the latter word being especially used of the movements of a drunkard.

10. **Rhenish**, Rhine wine.

11. **kettle-drum**, a drum resembling a kettle in shape; Douce quotes Cleaveland's *Fuscara*, "Tuning his draughts with drowsie hums As Danes carowse by *kettledrums*": **bray**, like *blare*, used especially of trumpets, clarions, and such like wind-instruments.

12. **The triumph of his pledge**, the victorious deed of drinking a toast, pledging some one in a toast; Delius points out that the words are said in the bitterest irony.

14. **to my mind**, to my thinking; in my opinion.

15. **And ... born**, and therefore by my birth accustomed to the fashion; cp. *R. J.* iv. 1. 109, "Then, as the *manner* of our country is."

16. **More honour'd ... observance**, which it is more honourable to neglect than to observe.

17. **heavy-headed revel**, revelry that ends in a heavy head, a headache; or perhaps only 'stupid,' 'doltish': **east and west**, far and wide; from one side of the world to the other.

18. **Makes ... nations**, causes us to be vilified and reproached by other nations; for **tax'd**, cp. *A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 71, "who cries out on pride That can therein *tax* any private party?" **of**, by.

19. **clepe**, call; A.S. *cleopian*, *clypian*, of which the participle still survives in the archaic *y-clept*, sometimes affectedly used at the present day.

19, 20. **and with ... addition**, brand us with the title of hogs; **addition**, in this sense is more commonly used by Shakespeare of an honourable title. In *Oth.* ii. 3. 79-81, the Dane is coupled with the German and the Hollander for their love of drinking, while the Englishman is said to outdo them all in this accomplishment.

21. **though ... height**, though performed with the loftiest chivalry and courage; Furness considers **at height** to be an instance of the absorption of the definite article between the two words, Abbott simply a case of omission.

22. **The pith ... attribute**, the most essential and most valuable part of our reputation for courage, sc. by making out that that courage is inspired by liquor. So, we speak of 'Dutch courage,' meaning courage inspired by hollands gin; and so Lamartine in his description of the battle of Waterloo accounts for the furious charges of our cavalry by asserting that they had been drugged with brandy. For **attribute**, cp. *T. C.* ii. 3. 125, "Much *attribute* he hath, and much the reason Why we ascribe it to him."

23, 4. **So, oft .. them**, in a similar manner it often happens in the case of particular men (here opposed to a whole nation) that in consequence of some natural blemish; **vicious** is not here used in the more common modern sense of 'addicted to vice,' but as = faulty, defective; **mole**, more commonly used of a physical mark, as in *M. N. D.* v. 1. 418, "Never *mole*, hare-lip, nor scar," etc.

25. **As**, Walker remarks that the word is here used not in the sense of 'for instance,' but in that of 'namely,' 'to wit.' The particulars enumerated in this passage are (1) **in their birth**, (2) **By the o'ergrowth**, etc., (3) **by some habit. Wherein they are not guilty**, for which defect they cannot be held answerable.

26. **Since ... origin**, since the nature of a man cannot choose from what source it will be derived; **his**, = its.

27, 8. **By the ... reason**, owing to the fact of some particular temperament developing itself to excess, and so breaking down the stronghold of reason; the figure is that of a plant, which by being allowed to grow unchecked to an excessive size, breaks down by its weight the enclosures and barriers by which it ought to be hemmed in. Warburton refers to the different humours, the sanguine, the melancholy, the phlegmatic, etc., by one or other of which each man was of old supposed to be governed.

29, 30. **that too much ... manners**, which by its excessive admixture viciously affects the form of manners naturally pleasing; for **plausive**, = worthy of applause, cp. *A. W.* i. 2. 53, "his *plausive* words He scatter'd not in ears": **that these men**, it chances, I say, that these men; the construction being continued from l. 23.

31. **Carrying ... defect**, bearing about upon them the brand of some one defect.

32. **Being ... star**, which they owe either to nature or to fortune; in the one case the defect is spoken of as the dress which nature has forced upon them, in the other as some affliction due to the malignant influence of fortune's stars.

33, 4. **Their virtues ... undergo**, their virtues in all other respects, even though they are as pure as grace itself, as infinite as it is possible for the nature of man to support; in **undergo** the idea is of a load of goodness such as frail human nature is hardly equal to; cp. *M. M.* i. 1. 24, "If any in Vienna be of worth To *undergo* such ample grace and honour." Here the nominative is changed from **these men** (l. 30) to **Their virtues**, implying these virtuous men.

35, 6. **Shall ... fault**, are certain in the general estimation of mankind to be looked upon as tainted with evil contracted from that particular fault; for **censure**, see note on l. 69 above; **take**, used in the sense of contracting a disease.

36-8. **the dram ... scandal**, the earlier quartos give *dram of eale* and *of a doubt*; the later ones *the dram of ease*. I have adopted a conjecture of Steevens's, not because I suppose it to be at all certain, but because it gives a reasonable sense; the small admixture of what is base often puts out, nullifies, the whole of the noble substance into which it has found entrance, and so makes the reproach which properly belongs to the **dram of base** cleave to the **noble substance**; though **own** should refer to the former. The following are among the more plausible conjectures recorded; 'the dram of base ... oft adoubt'; 'the dram of evil ... oft debase'; 'the dram of base ... oft eat out'; 'the dram of ill ... often dout'; but to chronicle the host that has gathered since the days of Steevens takes, with their explanations, more than six pages of small type in Furness's New Variorum edition; and of them all perhaps not one has carried conviction to anybody but its author. For **dout** = do out, as *don* = do on, *doff* = do off, *dup* = do up, cp. iv. 7. 189.

40. **Be thou ... damn'd**, whether you be a good spirit or an evil one condemned to hell; **spirit of health**, "a healed or saved spirit" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

41. **Bring with thee**, whether you bring with you.

43. **Thou comest ... shape**, you appear in a form which so provokes interrogation; cp. *Macb.* i. 3. 43, "Live you, or are you aught *That man may question?*" addressed to the witches.

45. **King ... Dane**, Hamlet in his excitement heaps one title upon another, expressing his readiness to use any term of address which may be likely to elicit an answer.

46. **burst in ignorance**, *i.e.* in the eager desire to have his ignorance dispelled.

47. **canonized**, over which the service prescribed in the canon for the dead has been performed; accent on the second syllable; **hearsed in death**, at your death consigned to the tomb.

48. **cerements**, grave clothes; the shroud, a cloth dipped in melted wax (Lat. *cera*, wax) in order to preserve it.

49. **inurn'd**, entombed; for *urn*, = grave, the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare *H. V.* i. 2. 228, "Or lay these bones in an unworthy *urn*."

50. **ponderous and marble**, ponderous because made of marble.

51. **may**, can possibly; see Abb. § 307.

52. **in complete steel**, in panoply, armed from head to foot: **complete**, accent on the former syllable. Steevens remarks that the Ghost is probably introduced in armour for the sake of greater solemnity; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner.

53. **Revisit'st .. moon**, revisit the earth at this hour of night when the moon is struggling to appear from behind the clouds.

54-6. **and we ... souls?** It is doubtful whether the construction here is 'making us (*we* where we should write *us*), to shake,' or 'that (from l. 52) we should be made to shake'; see Abb. § 216. In either case the general sense is 'so that the mental organization of us who are the sport of nature should be convulsed with thoughts that our souls cannot grasp; for **reaches**, see note on i. 1. 173, and cp. below, ii. 1. 62.

57. **should**, ought.

59, 60. **As if alone**, as if it had some knowledge which it wished to communicate to you in privacy.

61. **waves you**, invites you by waving its hand: **removed**, distant; cp. *W. T.* v. 2. 116, "she hath visited that *removed* house."

63. **then**, *i.e.* as it evidently will not speak to me here.

64. **should be**, can possibly be; see Abb. § 325.

65. **I do not ... fee**, I do not value my life at the worth of a pin; **set**, used in the language of gaming for 'stake'; I would not stake my life as an equivalent to a pin; **fee**, property, payment, from A.S. *feoh*, *feó*, cattle, property, of which cattle were the earliest form.

66. **for**, as regards.

69. **What if ... flood**, suppose it should tempt you to the ocean; **flood**, frequently in this sense, *e.g.* *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 127, *M. V.* i. 1. 10.

71. **That beetles ... sea**, that hangs frowningly over its base and dips down into the sea; **beetles**, ... "the idea was adopted from the M. E. *bitelbrowed*, beetle-browed, having projecting or sharp brows ... M. E. *bitel*, biting, sharp" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

73. **which might ... reason**, the sight of which might take away the controlling principle of your reason; for the construction here of **deprive**, see Abb. § 200, and for instances where pronominal and other adjectives are placed before a whole com-

pound noun instead of, as they strictly should be, before the second of the two nouns, see Abb. § 423

75. **toys of desperation**, desperate fancies; "an allusion to what many persons feel when on lofty heights, a desire of throwing themselves down" (Hunter).

76. **Without more motive**, though it have no other inducement.

78. **waves me still**, still invites me, by waving its arms, to follow it.

81. **Be ruled**, suffer yourself to be controlled, over-persuaded, by us in this matter: **My fate cries out**, my destiny calls upon me to act

82, 3. **And makes .. nerve**, Shakespeare seems always to have used **nerve** for sinew, tendon (in accordance with its derivation from Gk. νεῦρον, a sinew), not for a fibre conveying sensation; and from this passage to have supposed that nerve and artery were of the same texture, their outward appearance being very similar, and it not being known in his day that arteries convey the blood from the heart. **Nemean**, with the accent on the first syllable as in *L. L. L.* iv. 1. 90.

85. **I'll make ... me**, I'll send him who hinders me to join the ghost in the regions below; to *let*, = to hinder, from A.S. *læt*, slow; to *let*, = allow, from A.S. *lætan*, to allow.

87. **He waxes . imagination**, his excited imagination is driving him into madness; to *wax*, to grow, increase, become.

89. **Have after**, let us follow him; frequent in Shakespeare, who also has 'have *at*,' 'have *to*,' 'have *through*,' 'have *with*,' 'let me' or 'let us' having to be supplied: **issue**, conclusion, result.

90. **rotten**, utterly unsound; in a morbid state.

91. **it**, "that is, the issue" (Cl. Pr. Edd.): **Nay**, let us not leave it to heaven to set things right, but act ourselves.

SCENE V.

2. **My hour**, the time at which I must return to the lower regions.

6. **bound**, Delius points out that Hamlet uses the word in the sense of ready to go [M. E. *boun*, ready to go], while the Ghost takes it as the past participle of the verb *to bind*.

8. **What?** *sc.* am I to revenge!

10. **to walk the night**, to spend the night in wandering about the earth.

11. **to fast in fires**, the commentators quote passages from Chaucer and other old writers in which among the punishments of hell are mentioned hunger, sickness, frost, etc.; and if a spirit can be sensible to fire, as was the ordinary belief in regard to hell, there is no reason why it should not be sensible to hunger.

12. **my days of nature**, the days of my natural life; or, possibly, the days in which I was subject to the passions of the natural man.

13. **But . forbid**, except that I am forbidden; if it were not that I am forbidden; for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 343.

14. **my prison house**, *sc.* purgatory.

16. **harrow up**, see note on i. 1. 44; **up** gives an intensive force to the verb.

17. **start from their spheres**, cp. *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 153, "And certain stars *shot madly from their spheres*, To hear the sea maid's music." Furnivall (*Transactions of the N. S. Society*, 1877-9, pp. 431, etc.) has shown that in the Ptolemaic system, which Shakespeare followed, round the earth, which was the centre of the system, were nine hollow spheres, consisting of the seven planets, the fixed stars or firmament, and the *Primum Mobile*; and that in or on each of the seven spheres was a planet fixed, which was whirled by that sphere right round the earth in twenty-four hours, the driving power being the *Primum Mobile.*

18. **knotted and combined**, closely interwoven with each other.

19. **particular**, separate, individual: **an end**, for *a*-, representing a preposition, such as *in*, *on*, *of*, and retaining the *n* for euphony, see Abb. § 24.

20. **fretful porpentine**, easily irritated porcupine, which in its nervous excitement erects its bristles; Skeat shows that the animal had formerly two very similar names, "(1) *porkepyn*, shortly *porpin*, easily lengthened to *porpint* and finally altered to *porpentine* ... and (2) *pork-point*, *porpoint*" .. = "a 'pork' or pig furnished with points or sharp quills," and that the modern *porcupine* is from the M. E. porkepyn from O. F. *porc espin*, the pig with spines, ultimately from Lat. *spina*, a thorn.

21, 2. **But this . blood**, but this proclamation of the world beyond must not be made to those still in the flesh; in **eternal** there is a contrast between the everlasting and spiritual world, and that temporary world in which flesh and blood, *i.e.* material life exist; **blazon**, according to Skeat, is a corruption of *blase*, in the sense of to blaze abroad, proclaim, the final *n* being due (1) to M. E. *blasen*, to trumpet forth, and (2) to confusion with *blazon* in the purely heraldic sense.

27, 8. **Murder .. unnatural,** murder most foul, as it is even in circumstances where there is some palliation, such as long-existing hatred, great provocation: but in my case doubly foul, as being of so strange and unnatural a character, the murder of a brother by a brother to whom nothing but brotherly love had ever been shown.

29. **Haste me to know 't,** let me quickly know it; quickly put me in the position of learning it.

30. **meditation,** in its original sense, has the idea of pondering, dwelling upon a thing; and if here taken for the process of thought, is somewhat tautological with **thoughts of love.** Warburton takes the word in the sense given it by the Mystics, "that flight of the mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme Good,"—a sense which seems very forced here.

31. **sweep,** like a whirlwind: **apt,** ready and fitted for the purpose.

32-4. **And duller . this,** and more sluggish would you necessarily prove yourself than that heavy weed whose torpid growth clings to the banks of Lethe, if you were unwilling to bestir yourself in avenging my murder. For **roots,** the folios give *rots,* and this reading is preferred by some editors, who compare *A. C.* i. 4. 47, "To *rot* itself by motion." No two ideas, however, could be more unlike. In *A. C.* the "*vagabond flag*" (*i.e.* the water-plant, Iris) is represented *in mid-stream* borne forwards and backwards by each flow and ebb of the tide till at last it is rotted away by its constant action; here the *fat* weed lazily and securely adheres to the *bank.* For **Lethe** ("the river of oblivion," *P. L.* 583), used as an adjective, see Abb. § 22; for **shouldst,** § 322, and for **wouldst,** = were disposed, willing, § 331

35. **given out,** currently reported.

36-8. **so the whole . abused,** the consequence of which is that every one in Denmark is grossly deceived by a forged story of the manner in which I met my death; cp. *R. III.* iv. 3. 32, "the *process* of their death." The Cl. Pr. Edd. think that the word here has perhaps "the sense of an official narrative, coming nearly to the meaning of the French *procès verbal.*"

39. **did sting ... life,** stung your father to death.

40. **prophetic,** see above, i. 2. 254.

43. **With witchcraft .. gifts,** cp. *M. N. D.* i. 1. 27-35: **traitorous** in being given for the purpose of winning away her love from her husband.

45. **won to,** won over to, persuaded her to yield to.

47. **falling-off,** desertion, act of faithlessness; cp. i. *H. IV.* 1. 3. 94, "He never did *fall off,* my sovereign liege, But by the

chance of war"; *Lear*, i. 2. 116, "friendship *falls off*, brothers divide."

48-50. **whose love . . marriage**, whose love was so worthy of the name that it never for a moment swerved from the vow made to her at the altar; **even**, exactly, precisely.

50-2. **and to decline . . mine**! and to think that she should not only forsake me, but forsake me for a miserable creature whose natural gifts could not for a moment compare with mine! **to**, = in comparison with, see Abb. § 187.

53, 4. **But virtue . . heaven**, but just as virtue (*i.e.* a really virtuous person) will never be led astray even though it be solicited by lewdness (*i.e.* a lewd person) in the garb of an angel; **virtue** here is a noun absolute; see Abb. § 417; *lewd*, originally 'lay,' 'belonging to the laity,' then 'untaught,' 'ignorant,' then 'base,' 'vile.'

55-7. **So lust . . garbage**, so lust (*i.e.* a lustful person), though linked in marriage with one as white of soul as a radiant angel, will ravenously glut itself with garbage even in a bed of heavenly purity; cp. *Cymb.* i. 5. 47-50, "The cloyed will, That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, . . ravening first the lamb Longs after for the *garbage*"; **sate**, a shortened form of *satiate*; **garbage**, offal, refuse.

58. **soft**! let me pause in these reflections and go on quickly with my story.

59. **orchard**, garden; as always in Shakespeare; literally *ort-yard*, a yard for orts or worts; now used only for a garden of fruit-trees.

60. **My custom**, *i.e.* which, or as, is my custom: **of the afternoon**, during the afternoon; see Abb. § 176.

61. **Upon . . stole**, your uncle crept softly upon me in my unguarded hour, at a time when I fancied myself safe.

62. **hebenon**, probably *ebony*, though by some thought to be *henbane*. Both are spoken of as being poisonous, *e.g.* Marlowe, *Jew of Malta*, iii. 4. 99, "The juice of *hebon*," mentioned in a list of poisons; Drayton, *Bacon's Wars* (quoted by Steevens), "The pois'ning *henbane* and the mandrake drad." In regard to the latter, Grey refers to Pliny, who states that the oil made from the seeds of this plant, instilled into the ears, will injure the understanding; and Caldecott points out that "the eminent surgeon, Ambroise Paré, Shakespeare's contemporary, was suspected of having, when he dressed the ear of Francis II, infused poison into it." But the Lat. *hebenum*, ebony, is so near to *hebenon*, that it can scarcely be doubted that Shakespeare meant this tree.

63. **porches**, entrances.

64. **leperous,** producing upon the skin blotches like those in a leper: **whose effect,** which in its effect.

65 **Holds . man,** is so hostile to the, etc.

66. **quicksilver,** mercury; *quick-*, in its lively, fluid state, as opposed to solid, though the mineral has really no connection with silver: **courses,** rushes.

67. **The natural body,** the passages and channels of the body, here especially of the veins; **gates,** gateways.

68-70. **And with blood,** and with a sudden energy thickens and curdles with the same effect as that of acids upon milk, when dropped into it, the blood which, while in a healthy state, is thin and fluid; a *posset*, from which Shakespeare forms the verb, was a drink generally composed of hot milk curdled by being poured upon ale or sack, and was much in vogue at the time; for **eager,** see note on i. 4. 2.

71 3, **And a most body,** and a most instantaneous eruption spread over my skin, covering it with a loathsome crust such as is seen upon lepers; **bark'd,** formed as a bark or crust; *lazar*, a person afflicted with sores such as those of Lazarus in the parable; see *Luke*, xvi. 20.

75. **dispatch'd,** suddenly deprived of; more properly belonging to **life** than to **crown** or **queen**: cp. *Lear*, iv. 5. 12, "Edmund, I think, is gone ... to *dispatch* His nighted *life*."

76. **even in .. sin,** even when my sins were in full blossom.

77. **unhousel'd,** without having received the sacrament administered to dying persons: from A.S. *husel*, the eucharist: **disappointed,** unprepared, not furnished, or appointed, with the religious consolations given to a dying man: so in *T. N. K.* iii. 6. 136, we have, "like knight *appointed*," *i.e.* fully furnished with everything necessary in the way of arms and armour: **unaneled,** without having received extreme unction, the ceremony in the Catholic Church of anointing a dying person with holy oil; from A.S. "*on*, upon, and *elan*, to oil, . . from *ele*, substantive, oil" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

78. **No reckoning made,** without having made my reckoning with God by confession of my sins and repentance: **sent to my account,** sent to answer for my sins before the judgment-seat of God; cp. *K. J.* iv. 2. 216, "O, when the last *account* 'twixt heaven and earth Is to be made."

79. **imperfections,** shortcomings.

81. **nature,** any feelings of natural affection for me, and of natural regard for your mother's honour.

83. **luxury,** lust; as always in Shakespeare, the adjective and the adverb having the same idea.

84. **howsoever . . act**, whatever measures you may take to punish the murderer.

85, 6. **Taint not . . aught**, do not allow your mind to be in any way poisoned, or your soul to plot any injury, against your mother: **leave her to heaven**, leave her to be punished by God.

87. **thorns**, pricks of conscience.

89. **matin**, morning; not elsewhere found, though we still use *matins*, *i.e.* morning prayers: from Lat. *matutinus*, belonging to the morning.

90. **his uneffectual fire**, his fire rendered ineffectual by the morning beams; a proleptic sense. Halliwell points out that strictly speaking **his** should be *her*, the female only giving the light.

93. **shall I couple hell?** shall I invoke the powers of hell also?

94. **instant**, suddenly.

95. **stiffly**, firmly, unshrinkingly.

96, 7. **while memory . . globe**, so long as my brain remembers anything; so long as memory is not deposed from her throne in the brain; said as he points to his head; **distracted**, wracked with agonizing thoughts.

98. **table**, tablets; cp. *T. G.* ii. 7. 3, "Who art the *table* wherein all my thoughts Are visibly character'd and engraved."

99. **fond**, foolish, frivolous: **records**, accented on the latter syllable, as more usually in Shakespeare.

100. **saws**, sayings, maxims; **forms**, images formed in the mind; **pressures**, impressions; cp. iii. 2. 27.

101. **That youth . . there**, that my youthful observation has set down there, *i.e.* in the tablets of his memory.

102. **live**, have lasting record.

103. **book and volume**, the redundancy gives the idea of completeness; the one thing contained in the whole of the pages.

104. **Unmix'd . . matter**, unalloyed by anything of meaner importance.

107. **My tables,—** let me get out my tablets: **set it down**, make a memorandum of it.

110. **So, uncle, there you are**, so, uncle, now I have got my memorandum about you set down in black and white: **Now . . word**, now for the injunction given me by my father, *i.e.* the words **Adieu . . me**. For **word**, used of a phrase, cp. *R. II.* i. 3. 152, "The hopeless *word* of 'never to return'"; *R. J.* i. 4. 40, "Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own *word*." Steevens

supposes **word** to be an allusion to the watch-word, given every day in military service.

113. **secure him**, protect him from injury.

114. **So be it!** In the quartos these words are given to Hamlet; in the folios, to Marcellus, and as = 'amen' they seem a natural answer on the part of Marcellus to Horatio's prayer. From Horatio's again calling out (l. 115) it appears that he and Marcellus did not hear Hamlet's reply, if these words are Hamlet's, and consequently Hamlet may not have heard Horatio's exclamation **Heaven secure him!** which would not have been uttered in the same loud tone as the cry in l. 113. It follows, therefore, that the words, if Hamlet's, can only refer to some resolution at which he has arrived, or some action he has completed.

116. **come, bird, come,** "this is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them" (Hanmer); Hamlet taking up Horatio's call, as used in falconry, carries on in his reply the language of that pursuit.

121. **once,** so much as once; ever.

122. **But you 'll be secret?** Hamlet pretends to pause, just as he is about to disclose what had happened, for a further assurance from Horatio and Marcellus that they will never reveal what he may tell them.

124. **But he 's,** without his being; who is not.

127. **without all**, without further ceremony; cp. *W. T.* v. 1. 90, "his approach So *out of* circumstance and sudden."

128. **I hold ... part,** it seems better that we should, etc.; **shake** and **part,** subjunctives.

129. **You, as ... you,** you, to occupy yourselves in such a way as, etc.

130. **For every ... desire,** I say 'business and desire,' for you, like other men, are sure to have some, etc.

131. **Such as it is,** whatever it may be.

132. **go pray,** for the omission of 'to,' see Abb. § 349.

133. **whirling,** extravagant, inconsequent.

136. **Saint Patrick,** Shakespeare probably named the first saint that came into his head, and had no such subtle intention in choosing the patron saint of Ireland as some commentators suppose. He makes his characters swear by a variety of saints without much regard for their special functions or character.

137. **And much offence too,** "Hamlet purposely misunderstands his friend's words in order to evade their inquiries. At first he pretends that his words have given offence, whereas his

friends have merely found them vague; and when they reply that there is no offence, he takes 'offence' in a wider sense as a 'crime,' and refers it to the crime of his uncle that had just been divulged to him" (Delius).

138. **that let me tell you**, so much it is well you should know; said as though he were really confiding something to them.

139. **what is between us**, the secret between myself and the Ghost.

140. **O'ermaster 't as you may**, I must recommend you to curb it as best you may.

141. **As you are... soldiers**, on your faith as, etc.

146. **not I**, *i.e.* I will not divulge it.

147. **Upon my sword**, it was customary to swear upon a sword, the hilt of which with the blade formed a cross.

149. **Indeed, indeed**, strongly emphasizing his demand. Staunton prints *in deed, in deed*, and explains, "Not in words only, but in *act*, *in form*; upon the cross of my sword swear yourselves."

150. **truepenny**, according to Collier, "a mining term, signifying a particular indication in the soil of the direction in which ore is to be found"; but the term was evidently used in a wider sense, for in *The Returne from Pernassus* (quoted in the *N. S. Society's Transactions* for 1877-9, p. 466), we have, "What have we here? *old true-penny* come to towne, to fetch away the liuing in his old greasie slops the time hath beene when such a fellow medled with nothing but his plowshare, his spade, and his hobnailes, and so to a peece of bread and cheese, and went his way"; from which the word appears to have been nothing more than a familiarly contemptuous term applied to a countryman, much as 'gaffer' (*i.e.* grandfather) is still used in villages to old men. Marston, *The Malcontent*, iii. 1. 250, has "Illo, ho, ho, ho! art there, *old truepenny*," made up of Horatio's words in l. 115 and Hamlet's here, in sarcastically addressing Mendoza.

151. **cellarage**, not exactly the same as 'cellar,' but underground rooms suitable for cellars; here of course meaning nothing more than underground.

153. **Never... seen**, *i.e.* swear never, etc.

156. **Hic et ubique**, here and everywhere; what, says Hamlet, are you here, there, and everywhere?

158, 9. **And lay .. heard**, *i.e.* and swear never, etc.

162. **canst fast**? can you burrow in the earth like a mole so fast that you have already reached the point directly under the spot to which we have moved?

163 **A worthy pioner** ! well done ! you are an excellent pioneer; for the form of the word, see Abb § 492.

164. **O day .. strange** ! I call day and night to witness if this be not wondrous strange; *i.e.* assuredly this is wondrous strange.

165. **And therefore . welcome**, if, as you say, it is strange, then treat it with the courteous welcome you would give to a stranger.

166-7. **There are . philosophy**, to you this may seem very strange, but that is only because there are many more things in heaven and earth than the philosophy to which you are so addicted ever conceived; for **your**, in this colloquial sense, see Abb. § 221.

169. **so help you mercy**, promise as you hope to find the mercy of God in your hour of need.

170. **How strange myself**, however strange and odd I may be in my manner.

172 **an antic disposition**, a fantastic behaviour; **antic**, literally old, then old-fashioned, quaint.

174. **encumber'd**, locked one with the other, like a man in deep thought; an attitude which Hamlet imitates as he speaks. To *encumber* is literally to load, hence to impede freedom of action, as would be the case with the arms folded: **this head-shake**, this grave shake of the head assuming intense wisdom; this Lord-Burleigh-like nod of the head.

175. **pronouncing of**, see Abb. § 178: **doubtful**, enigmatical.

176. '**Well, well, we know**,' *&c.* but do not care to tell: '**We could . . would**,' we could explain all this, if we thought proper to do so; for **an if**, see Abb. § 103.

177. **If we list**, if we should so please; **list**, subjunctive from A S. *lystan*, to desire, used impersonally: '**There be .. might**,' there are those who could explain this, if they were allowed to do so; **be**, used with an affectation of profound wisdom.

178. **giving out**, declaration; cp. *Oth.* iv. 1. 131, "This is the monkey's own *giving out*"; **to note**, to indicate by the outward signs of manner or speech. The construction of the sentence, which began with **you never shall**, becomes changed, owing to the long parenthesis, to (never) **to note**; cp. *K. J.* v. 2. 37-9, "Where these two Christian armies might combine The blood of malice in a vein of league, And not to spend it so unneighbourly."

179-81. **this not to do . Swear**, swear, according as you hope that heaven's grace and mercy may help you in your time of need, not to do this; the oath which Hamlet calls upon them to take would be 'I swear, so help me grace and mercy at my most need,

not to do so,' the help of grace and mercy being made by the taker of the oath conditional upon his keeping it; for **most**, used for *greatest*, see Abb. § 17.

184. **With all .. you**, with my best love I recommend myself to you; by an avowal of my great love to you I solicit a return of equal love to myself: a polite form of farewell.

185. **Hamlet**, Clarke notes in this use of the third person the characteristic "of the philosophic man,—reflective, thoughtful, given to moralize and speak in the abstract." In the mouth of Caesar and of Macbeth the frequent use is characteristic of arrogance.

186. **friending**, friendship shown in action.

187. **God willing**, if it so please God: **shall not lack**, shall not be wanting.

188. **And still .. lips**, and ever be silent of what you have seen; the placing of the finger upon the lips being a sign that silence is to be kept

189. **out of joint**, utterly disordered; a metaphor from a bone which has slipped from its proper juncture with another bone, the same metaphor being apparently mixed up with that of setting a clock.

189, 90. **O cursed spite . . right**, "Hamlet does not lament that the disjointed time is to be *set right* by him, but that he ... whose duty it of necessity becomes to set the time right, should *have been born*" (Seymour).

191. **Nay, ... together**, said as Horatio and Marcellus are on the point of leaving him, under the idea that he wished to be left alone.

ACT II. SCENE I.

1. **notes**, memorandums of advice; cp. *Cymb.* i. 1. 171, "left these *notes* Of what commands I should be subject to."

3. **You shall . . wisely**, the vain old man compliments himself in complimenting Reynaldo; **shall**, you will certainly; see Abb. § 315; **marvellous**, used adverbially.

4, 5. **to make ... behaviour**, to make inquiries as to how he has borne himself since he arrived in Paris; the folios give *inquiry*, but in *Per.* iii. Pr. 22. we have *inquire* as a substantive, necessary to the rhyme, and though that Prologue is by Gower it is authority for the existence of the word.

6. **well said**, you are quite right; a frequent expression of approval of deeds as well as words.

7. **Inquire me**, inquire on my account; on the old dative = for me, by me, see Abb. § 220: **Danskers**, "*Danske*, for Denmark, occurs often in Warner's *Albion's England*" (Capell).

8. **And how .. keep**, and what their manner of life is, who they are, what their resources, income, and in what part of the city they live; **keep**, dwell; a term still in use in the Universities.

9. **What company ... expense**, what company they keep, whom they entertain, and how much they spend in such hospitality; inquiries by means of which it may be indirectly ascertained whether they are companions of Laertes.

10. **By this ... question**, by this roundabout way in which your questioning drives at its purpose; cp. iii. 1. 1, "*drift* of circumstance"; and iii. 3. 83, "in our circumstance and course of thought."

11. **know**, are acquainted with.

11, 2. **come you ... it**, approach more nearly to the subject than these demands regarding particulars will bring you; for **it**, used indefinitely, see Abb. § 226.

13. **Take ... him**, pretend that you have some distant acquaintance with him.

14. **As thus**, saying for instance.

17. **but ... well**, adding 'but only slightly.'

19. **Addicted so and so**, with such and such propensities.

19, 20. **and there ... please**, and at this point, when you have got so far in your conversation, you may put upon him any imputations you think fit: **rank**, gross.

22-4. **But ... liberty**, but imputations of such wildness and extravagances as are commonly found to be the accompaniments of youth when not kept in too strait-laced control; of young fellows when not tied, as we say, to their mother's apron-strings; for **slips**, cp. *Oth.* iv. 1. 9, "So they do nothing, 'tis a venial *slip*."

25. **fencing**, "I suppose it means piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and consequently quarrelling and brawling. 'The cunning of Fencers applied to quarrelling.' Gosson, *Schoole of Abuse*" (Malone).

26. **you may go so far**, you may venture to bring these charges against him.

28. **'Faith**, *i.e.* in faith, indeed: **as you ... charge**, if you qualify the accusation, as you may do by plausible excuses.

29. **another scandal**, the further reproach.

30. **open to**, liable to the charge of incontinency.

31. **breathe**, utter, give voice to: **quaintly**, with such ingenious reservations.

32. **the taints of liberty**, the faults which naturally arise from a young man being so completely his own master.

33. **fiery**, high-spirited, impetuous.

34. **A savageness .. blood**, a wildness such as is found in hot-blooded young men not yet tamed by the stern discipline of life; the language is from falconry, in which pursuit to 'reclaim' (*i.e.* to call back) a hawk was to bring it to obedience in stooping to the lure; thus Cotgrave, "*Reclame*, a loud calling, whooting, whooping, to make a Hawk stoop unto the lure."

35. **Of general assault**, to the attack of which all are liable.

36. **Wherefore ... this?** you would ask me why I make these suggestions to you.

37. **would**, should like to: **drift**, that at which I am driving; my secret object.

38. **a fetch of warrant**, a well-approved design; a stratagem which will be justified by its success; cp. *Lear*, ii. 4. 90, "Mere *fetches*," *i.e.* pretexts; the quartos read 'a fetch of *wit*,' *i.e.* a cunning stratagem.

39. **You laying ... son**, you having imputed these trivial blemishes to my son.

40. **As 'twere ... working**, comparing him in that way to something that by being used has lost somewhat of its first gloss.

42. **Your ... converse**, the person with whom you are talking: **him you would sound**, he, I mean, to the bottom of whose thoughts you wish to get; the figure is that of taking soundings at sea; on **him**, put for *he* by attraction to *whom* understood, see Abb. § 208.

43-5. **Having ever ... consequence**, if he has ever seen the youth you speak of guilty of the sins already mentioned, he will be sure to endorse your remarks with, show his agreement by, some such words as these; for **consequence**, = that which follows, cp. *Oth.* ii. 3. 65, "If *consequence* do but approve my dream."

46. **or so**, or something of the sort.

47, 8. **According ... country**, using such phraseology as is customary in his country or such title as is generally applied to men; **phrase** going with **country**, **addition** with **man**; cp. *W. T.* iii. 2. 164, 5, "though I with death and with Reward did threaten and encourage him"; for **addition**, see note on i. 4. 20.

50. **mass**, the sacrament of the Eucharist in the Catholic Church.

51. **leave**, break off.

55. **He closes with you thus**, he agrees with you in these words.

57. **Or then, or then**, or at some time or other: **with such, or such**, accompanied by such and such persons.

58. **o'ertook**, overpowered by drink; an euphemism for 'drunk': **'s**, his: **rouse**, see note on i. 2. 127.

59. **falling out**, wrangling; with the French, tennis was a particularly favourite game, and it was from that country that it was brought to England. In the *Scornful Lady*, I. 1, Beaumont and Fletcher speak of being in France and playing tennis as almost synonymous; "And after your whole year spent in *tennis* and broken speech," Loveless being about to visit France.

61. **Your bait of falsehood**, this falsehood which I suggested to you to use as a bait; **takes ... truth**, catches this fish, viz. the truth of the matter; cp. *M. V.* i. 1. 101, 2, "But fish not, with this melancholy *bait*, For this fool *gudgeon*, this opinion"; **bait of**, bait made of, consisting in.

62. **we of ... reach**, we men of wisdom and far-reaching intellect; the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare *L. L. L.* iv. 2. 30, "we *of* taste and feeling."

63. **windlasses**, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1869, shows that in Shakespeare's day *windlass*, "literally a winding, was used to express taking a circuitous course, fetching a compass, making an indirect advance, or more colloquially beating about the bush instead of going directly to a place or object"; he quotes Golding's translation of Ovid, "Continued not directly forth but gan me down to stoupe And fetched a *windlasse* round about"; and again, "Nor make a *windlas* over all the champion fields about": **assays of bias**, indirect attempts; the **bias** was the weight put into the bowl, at the game of bowls, to make it travel in a curved path so as to avoid other bowls in its way, or to counteract the lie of the ground; cp. *K. J.* ii. 1. 574-8, "Commodity, the *bias* of the world .... this vile-drawing *bias*, This sway of motion."

64. **indirections**, oblique courses; cp. *K. J.* iii. 1. 276, "though indirect, Yet *indirection* thereby grows direct."

65. **So by .. advice**, so by following out the lesson of advice I just now gave you; **lecture and advice**, a hendiadys.

66. **You have me**, you understand me, take me.

69. **in yourself**, for yourself; not being content with what you hear of his conduct, but using your own observation also as to his tendencies.

71. **And let ... music**, probably, as it is generally taken, let him follow his own bent, strike what note he pleases; though the first quarto reads "And *bid* him ply his musicke," which seems to be intended literally: **Well**, very good.

75. **sewing in my closet**, occupied with needle-work in my own room; for **closet**, cp. *J. C.* ii. 1. 35, "The taper burneth in your *closet*."

76. **doublet**, an inner garment, a double to the outer one, but used also for a coat generally: **unbraced**, with the 'points' not tied.

77. **foul'd**, stained with dirt, muddy.

78. **Ungarter'd**, with no garters to his hose, or with his garters not fastened: **down-gyved to his ancle**, allowed to fall down to his ancle, and so looking like the fetters around the ancles of a malefactor.

79. **knocking each other**, knocking together in his agitation

80. **so piteous in purport**, so expressive of misery.

82. **To speak of horrors**, only in order that he might tell of its horrors.

83. **Mad for thy love?** distracted by his intense love for you?

85. **held me hard**, grasped my wrist tightly.

86. **Then goes .. arm**, then stands back from me at the full length of his arm.

87. **thus o'er his brow**, holding his forehead and shading his eyes so that he might fix his look more intently upon me.

88. **perusal**, earnest study.

89. **As he would draw it**, as though he wished to paint it; literally as he would do if he wished to paint it; see Abb. § 178.

90. **a little ... arm**, slightly shaking my arm; on the verbal noun followed by *of*, see Abb. § 178.

93. **As it . bulk**, that it seemed to shatter his whole trunk; for **bulk**, = breast, bust, Dyce quotes Cotgrave and Florio, and Singer Baret's *Alvearie*, "The *Bulke* or breast of a man."

94. **that done**, after that.

95. **with his ... turn'd**, looking all the while over his shoulder.

98. **And to the last ... me**, and till he disappeared in the doorway, kept them fixed upon me.

99. **go seek**, for the omission of *to*, see Abb. § 349.

100. **ecstasy**, madness; literally a standing out of oneself; applied by Shakespeare to any violent emotion.

101. **Whose violent ... itself**, whose violent nature destroys itself; **property**, that which specially belongs to it; Lat. *proprius*, own; for **fordoes**, cp. below, v. 1. 207, *Lear*, v. 3. 291, "Your eldest daughters have *fordone* themselves."

105. **hard words**, harsh answers to his entreaties.

106. **as . command**, in obedience to your commands.

107. **repel**, reject, decline to receive; cp. below, II. 2. 146.

107, 8. **denied .. me**, refused him permission to visit me.

109, 10. **I am sorry . him**, I am sorry that I did not observe him with greater care and judgment; "'*Quoter*, To *quote*, or *marke* in the margent, to note by the way,' Cotgrave" (Malone). Cp. *T. C.* iv. 5. 233; *R. J.* i. 4. 31.

111. **wreck**, ruin: **beshrew**, a mild form of imprecation; literally 'curse.'

112 **as proper . age**, as much a characteristic of old men like myself.

113. **To cast ... opinions**, to over-reach ourselves by a belief in our far-sightedness.

114. **sort**, class.

115. **discretion**, discernment; the old look too far ahead, the young do not look ahead at all.

116. **This must be known**, the king has a right to know this.

116, 7. **which, being . . love**, for if we kept this secret, the hiding of it might be more productive of grief than the aversion to utter it would be productive of love; *i.e.* the concealment of what has happened would be attended by more danger to us (if that concealment were discovered) than the good motive which actuated us would be attended by the love of those from whom we concealed it, even if, on its discovery, that good motive were credited. Polonius's sentiments are purely selfish, and he thinks nothing of the consequences to anyone else. The Cl. Pr. Edd. think the sense is, "Hamlet's mad conduct might cause more grief if it were hidden than the revelation of his love for Ophelia would cause hatred, *i.e.* on the part of the King and Queen"; but they admit that the Queen afterwards, iii. 1. 38, and v. 1. 230-2, expresses her approval of the match.

SCENE II.

STAGE DIRECTION. *Rosencrantz*, "A Danish nobleman of this name attended the Danish ambassador into England on the accession of James I." (Thornbury).

2. **Moreover that**, over and above the fact that.

3. **provoke**, incite, instigate.

4. **Our hasty sending**, our sending for you in such haste.

5. **transformation**, complete metamorphosis.

6. **Sith**, since; from "... A.S. *sith than* .. after that, since ... a contraction from *sith than*, put for *sith thám*, after that; where *thám*, that, is the dative case masculine of the demonstrative pronoun used as a relative" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Here used illatively; in l. 12 temporarily.

7. **that it was**, that which it was; for the omission of the relative, see Abb. § 244: **What it should be**, what it is probable that it should be.

8, 9. **that thus** .. **himself**, that has so completely estranged him from all knowledge of himself; made it impossible for him to recognize what is proper, becoming to him; for **put him** ... **from**, cp. below, iii. 1. 182, and *H. VIII.* ii. 2. 57, "And with some other business *put* the king *From* these sad thoughts."

10. **I cannot dream of**, I cannot conceive in the faintest degree, by the wildest flight of imagination.

11. **being** .. **him**, since you were brought up with him from your earliest days; for **of**, applied to time and meaning *from*, see Abb. § 167.

12. **And sith** .. **humour**, and as you have since then been so intimately acquainted with his youthful disposition, his disposition since he grew up to manhood; **youth and humour**, a hendiadys; the quartos read *haviour*.

13. **That**, redundant owing to the parenthesis: **vouchsafe your rest**, be good enough to remain.

14. **companies**, companionship; for the plural, see note on i. 1. 173.

15. **pleasures**, indulgence in the way of amusements.

16. **So much** .. **glean**, so far as opportunity will enable you to pick up stray indications; in a literal sense, to gather what is left of the corn after the field has been reaped and the sheaves tied together.

17. **Whether**, metrically a monosyllable.

18. **That**, ... **remedy**, which, if made known to us, it would be in our power to cure.

21. **To whom he more adheres**, for whom he has a closer regard; cp. l. 12, above.

22. **gentry**, courtesy; cp. v. 2. 106.

24. **For the supply** ... **hope**, thereby to furnish us with the means of realizing our hope in regard to Hamlet; thereby to furnish us with a hope which may be converted into a certainty.

25. **visitation**, visit; now more generally used for the appearance of some affliction, as the verb *to visit*, in *L. L. L.* v. 2. 222, "These lords are visited," *sc.* by the plague (of love); or for the act of habitual visiting, as in the visitation of the sick.

26. **As fits** ... **remembrance**, as it is fitting for a king to show when bearing in mind a service rendered to him.

27. **of us**, over us; see Abb. § 174.

28, 9. **Put your** ... **entreaty**, signified your desires, which are

to a subject too awful to be disobeyed, in the shape of command rather than of entreaty: **But**, though you might have commanded rather than entreated, we are just as ready to obey.

30. **in the full bent**, with the most thorough bending (of our energies); the figure is that of bending a bow to its fullest extent; cp. below, iii. 2. 367, and *M. A.* ii 3. 232, "it seems her affections have their *full bent*."

32. **To be commanded**, to be put to such purposes as you may direct.

34. **Thanks . Rosencrantz**, the queen inverts the order of the king's form of thanks to show that their gratitude was equally great to each of them.

37. **bring**, conduct; as frequently in Shakespeare.

38, 9. **Heavens ... him**! God grant that he may find pleasure in our society and help in our actions on his behalf; cp. *Temp.* i. 2. 175, "*Heavens* thank you for 't!"

41. **Are joyfully return'd**, have come back full of joy at the success of their mission.

42. **Thou still .. news**, you have ever been the author, parent, of good news; cp. *A. W.* i. 2 62, "whose judgements are Mere *fathers* of their garments"; for **still**, cp. i. 1. 122.

44, 5. **I hold ... king**, I keep my duty and my soul as equally things in trust to my God and to my king; my soul to God, my duty to my king; in **hold** there seems to be an allusion to feudal holdings.

46-8, **or else ... to do**, unless the brain of mine follows up the trail of policy less keenly than it has been accustomed to do; **this brain of mine**, said with an affectation of humility which yet does not hide his complacent belief in himself; in **trail of policy** there seems to be a blending of two ideas, (1) the trail left by events, as an animal leaves a trail behind him either by his footmarks or by his scent, (2) the clue discovered by sagacious management.

50. **O, speak ... hear**, let me hear about that first, and leave the subject of the mission, as of much less interest to me, till afterwards.

51. **first**, "thus Polonius gains the opportunity of studying a brief and pointed exordium, the only fault in which is its being altogether needless and misplaced" (Moberly).

52. **the fruit**, what we now call the dessert (that which is *served apart*), *i.e.* fruits and sweetmeats (formerly) put on the table after dinner, or served in a different room.

53. **Thyself ... in**, do you pay them the compliment of bringing them in.

54. **my dear Gertrude,** the folios give 'my sweet Queen,' which Grant White prefers as smacking more of the honeymoon.

55. **distemper,** here mental derangement; but also used by Shakespeare of physical sickness, *Cymb.* iii. 4. 194, and of intemperance in drinking, *H. V.* ii. 2. 54, *Oth.* i. 1. 99; and below, iii. 2. 288.

56. **the main,** the principal matter; cp. *T. C.* ii. 3. 273, "We must with all our *main* of power stand fast."

58. **shall sift him,** shall discover by sifting him.

60. **Most fair . desires,** most courteous reciprocation of your greetings and good wishes.

61. **Upon our first,** at our first audience with him to state the object of our mission: **sent out,** issued orders.

62. **levies,** acts of levying troops.

63. **'gainst the Polack,** against the Poles; **Polack,** used collectively.

64, 5. **But, . highness,** but, having looked into the matter more closely, he found that this preparation was in reality directed against, etc.; **truly** goes with **was**; cp. *M. N. D.* i. 1. 126, "Of something *nearly that concerns* ourselves," *i.e.* which nearly concerns; and see Abb. § 421.

66, 7. **That so ... hand,** that he, in the powerlessness to which he had been reduced by sickness and old age, had been so imposed upon; cp. *Macb.* iii. 1. 80, "pass'd in probation to you How you were *borne in hand*"; Marlowe, *Jew of Malta,* iii. 3. 3, "Both *held in hand,* and flatly both beguiled": **sends out,** for the ellipsis of the nominative, see Abb. § 399.

68. **in brief,** not to enter into details.

69. **Receives rebuke,** is rebuked by, and loyally accepts rebuke.

71. **To give .. majesty,** to make an attack upon, etc., to make trial of superiority by first attacking, etc.

73. **In annual fee,** "the king gave his nephew a *feud,* or *fee* (in land), of that yearly value" (Ritson).

74. **commission,** authority.

75. **So levied as before,** levied in the manner already mentioned.

76. **shown,** set forth in writing.

77. **quiet pass,** a free passage.

78. **this enterprise,** *i.e.* the troops to be engaged in this enterprise.

79. **On such ... allowance,** on such conditions regarding the security of your country and the limits of action to be allowed to them.

80. **It likes us well**, we are well satisfied; on the frequency of impersonal verbs in Early and Elizabethan English, see Abb. § 297.

81. **at our ... time**, at a time more suitable for consideration. For instances of an indefinite and apparently not passive use of passive participles, see Abb. § 374.

82. **Answer ... business**, give our deliberate answer regarding this business. To get rid of what Shakespeare might call the 'preposterous' position of **Answer**, the hysteron proteron of grammarians, Hanmer would read 'And think upon an answer to,' while another conjecture is 'And think upon and answer to.'

83. **well-took labour**, service loyally undertaken and successfully carried out.

86. **liege**, see note on i. 1. 15: **expostulate**, investigate by means of discussion: in *T. G.* iii. 1. 251, "The time now serves not to *expostulate*," the word means simply to enter into discussion.

87. **should be**, ought to be; what its essentials are.

90. **soul**, essence: **wit**, wisdom

91. **outward flourishes**, mere ostentatious embellishments; as in ornamental writing.

95. **But let that go**, but let that pass, never mind about further discussion of that point: **matter**, what is material.

96. **art**, "the Queen uses 'art' in reference to Polonius's stilted style; the latter uses it as opposed to truth and nature" (Delius).

98. **figure**, in the sense of a figure in rhetoric; said of his own words "'tis true ... true"; what Puttenham, *Art of Poesie*, calls the figure of 'antimetavole.'

100. **and now remains**, and it, or there, remains; for the ellipsis, see Abb. § 404.

103. **For this .. cause**, for this result which is one of deficiency, is not without its own cause.

104. **Thus it ... thus**, that is the position of matters so far (*i.e.* I have stated the case as regards his being mad, and of his madness being due to some cause or other) and now I come to my conclusion (showing *what* the cause is of the madness which I have demonstrated).

105. **Perpend**, weigh carefully what I am about to say; the word here used by Polonius in all seriousness, occurs again in the affected jargon of the Clowns in *A. Y. L.* iii. 1. 69, *T. N.* v. 1. 307, and of the braggart Pistol in *M. W.* ii. 1. 119, *H. V.* iv. 4. 8.

106. **have .. mine,** I say 'have,' which is true so long as she is mine.

108. **gather, and surmise,** a further piece of pedantry.

109. **the celestial .. idol,** the heavenly Ophelia, the object of my soul's worship: **beautified,** &c. by nature, *i.e.*, beautiful. Dyce says 'the vile phrase' is common enough in our earlier writers, and Polonius's opinion in a matter of taste is certainly not final. Shakespeare uses the word again in *T. G.* iv. 1. 55.

113. **In her ... these,** an imitation of the form of address upon letters in those days; *i.e.* I send these writings to her hoping they may find a place in, etc., letters being often treasured up in that way; cp. *T. G.* iii. 1. 250, "Thy letters ... Which being writ to me, shall be delivered Even *in the milk-white bosom* of thy love."

115. **I will be faithful,** I will keep nothing back, will reveal to you everything I know myself.

118. **Doubt ... liar,** suspect even truth itself of being, etc.

120. **ill at these numbers,** a poor hand at writing verses: **art,** skill, capacity.

121. **reckon,** number; his groans being innumerable; Delius takes the word to mean "number metrically"; **most best,** better than all superlatives can express; cp. *Cymb.* iii. 2. 58, "O not like me; For mine 's *beyond beyond.*"

123, 4. **whilst .. him,** so long as he lives; **machine,** the body endowed with life. The Cl. Pr. Edd. point out that the letter is written in the affected language of euphuism.

126-8. **And more ... ear,** and over and above this has described to me all his solicitations, specifying when, how, and where they were made.

129. **What do ... me?** said with sorrowful reproach, do you suppose me to be so wanting in wisdom as to allow her to receive proffers of love from one so much above her in rank as a prince?

131. **fain,** gladly; properly an adjective: **what ... think,** what might you *not* think, as we should now say.

132. **this hot ... wing,** this love borne upon so strong a wing; a figure from birds in full flight.

133. **As I ... that,** for, I must tell you, I certainly did perceive it.

136. **If I had ... table-book,** if I had shown myself of no more intelligence than a desk or memorandum-book (which have secrets committed to their keeping, but no power to take any action regarding those secrets).

137. **Or given ... dumb,** or lulled my heart to sleep, so that my

feelings should not trouble me; cp. *W. T.* i. 2. 317, "To *give* mine enemy a lasting *wink*," *i.e.* put him to sleep for ever.

138. **Or look'd ... sight**, or, recognizing the real importance of his love, had not taken such serious notice of it as I ought. There is a climax here.

139. **I went .. work**, instead of behaving in such a supine way, I proceeded to act with promptitude and firmness; Abbott, Bacon, *Essay of Truth*, remarks, "*round* was naturally used of that which was symmetrical and complete (as a circle is): then of anything *thorough*. Hence (paradoxically enough) 'I went *round* to work,' means I went straight to the point."

140. **bespeak**, address with words of caution; more commonly used of ordering something beforehand. For the use of the prefix *be*-, see Abb. § 438.

141. **out of thy star**, far above you in his fortunes; another allusion to the influence of the stars upon man's destiny; cp. *T. N.* ii. 5. 156, "*in my stars* I am above thee."

142. **prescripts**, instructions to govern conduct; cp. *A. C.* iii. 8. 5, "Do not exceed The *prescript* of this scroll."

143. **lock ... resort**, shut herself up where he could not gain access to her.

144. **tokens**, *sc.* of love: presents, etc.

145. **she took ... advice**, she followed, and profited by, my advice.

146. **repulsed**, meeting with this repulse from her.

147. **Fell into ... fast**, first sank into a state of melancholy, which was followed by his abstaining from food.

148. **a watch**, a sleepless state; cp. *Cymb.* iii. 4. 43, "To lie in *watch* there and to think of him"; and the verb, iii. 2. 253, below.

149. **lightness**, lightheadedness, flightiness; cp. *C. E.* v. 1. 72, "And thereof comes it that *his head is light*": **by this declension**, by these downward degrees, this gradual passage from one state to another.

151. **And all we**, and which we all; "a feeling of the unemphatic nature of the nominatives *we* and *they* prevents us from saying 'all we,' 'all they'" (Abb. § 240).

153. **Hath there been . otherwise?** in all the years of my service as lord chamberlain can you call to mind a single occasion when I have made a positive assertion that has afterwards proved to be unfounded? Polonius is deeply scandalized at the idea of his infallibility being called in question.

156. **Take this ... otherwise**, you may strike my head from my

shoulders if what I tell you does not prove to be the fact; said as he points to his head and shoulders.

157. **If circumstances lead me,** if I have any facts to guide me, any clue to follow up.

159. **the centre,** *sc.* of the earth: **How may ... further?** what further test can we employ in order to arrive at certainty in the matter.

160. **four hours,** used for a long, but indefinite, time. Staunton and Eltze have shown that in Elizabethan writers *four* and *forty* were frequently used in this indefinite way. To Indian students their own *panch chahar* will at once occur.

161. **lobby,** hall, ante-room, passage.

162. **loose ... him,** allow my daughter to come out of her room to meet him.

163. **an arras,** a fold of tapestry; more frequently '*the* arras'; so called from Arras, a town in Artois, France, the chief seat of the tapestry manufacture.

164. **encounter,** meeting.

165. **thereon,** in consequence of his love.

166, 7. **Let me ... carters,** let me no longer hold the responsible post I have so long held, but be sent to the country to busy myself with such a degrading pursuit as agriculture.

168. **poor wretch,** poor unhappy fellow.

169. **Away,** make haste to conceal yourselves.

170. **I'll .. presently,** I'll attack him (*i.e.* in speech) immediately; cp. *T. N.* i. 3. 60, "*board* her, woo her, assail her"; **presently,** sometimes used by Shakespeare in the modern sense of 'by and by', 'shortly', but much more frequently as = at once, immediately: **give me leave,** excuse my interrupting you.

172. **Well, God-a-mercy,** well, thank God; a contraction of 'God have mercy.'

174. **Excellent well,** thoroughly well; for adjectives used as adverbs, see Abb. § 1: **a fishmonger,** various recondite explanations have been given of Hamlet's meaning here, especially by the metaphysical Germans; the most simple one is Coleridge's, that Polonius is regarded by Hamlet as being sent to fish out his secret,—if, indeed, Hamlet meant anything more than to mystify the inquisitive old man.

177. **Honest, my lord!** Polonius is indignant that his honesty should be doubted.

178. **as this world goes,** as times are now.

181, 2. **being a ... carrion,** though a God, yet stooping to kiss carrion; Malone quotes i. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 113, "Didst thou never

see *Titan* [i.e. the sun] *kiss* a dish of butter?" and *King Edward the Third*, 1596, "The freshest *summers day* doth soonest *taint* The loathed *carrion* that it seems to *kiss*." Possibly, as has been suggested, this obscure speech has reference to something previously passing in Hamlet's mind; more probably, I think, it was intended to contain such an admixture of sense and nonsense as would lead Polonius to the very conclusion at which he arrives in ll. 203, 4, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it."

185. **look to 't**, be cautious in the matter; take care that she does not **walk i' the sun.**

186. **How say you by that?** what do you think of that? said to himself in congratulation upon his own acuteness in divining that Hamlet's love for his daughter was the cause of his madness. For instances of *by* meaning *about*, *concerning*, see Abb. § 145.

186, 7. **Still .. daughter**, ever dwelling on the subject of my daughter; ever harping on the same string; cp. *R. III.* iv. 4. 364, "*Harp* on that string, madam; that is past"; *A. C.* iii. 13. 142, "*harping* on what I am, Not what he knew I was."

188. **far gone**, *sc.* in love.

189. **suffered .. love**, suffered the extremest pangs for love's sake; cp. Touchstone's descriptions of his sufferings, *A. Y. L.* ii. 4. 46-57: **very near this**, *i.e.* and was almost as far gone as Hamlet.

192. **the matter**, the subject matter.

193. **who**, for instances of neglect in the inflection of *who*, see Abb. § 274. Hamlet pretends to understand Polonius' question as meaning 'What is the matter in dispute?'.

197. **eyes .. gum**, eyes from which the rheum exudes of the colour and consistency of (liquid) amber or the gum of plum-trees; cp. *H. V.* iv. 2. 48, "The *gum down-roping* from their pale-dead *eyes*."

198. **a plentiful lack**, strictly speaking, a contradiction of terms: **hams**, knee-joints; cp. *R. J.* ii. 4. 57, "such a case as yours constrained a man *to bow in the hams*."

199. **most powerfully ... believe**, most thoroughly believe; the exaggerated language is part of the plan to bamboozle the old man.

200. **hold it not honesty**, do not consider it a gentlemanly sentiment to give utterance to.

200-2. **for yourself .. backward**, probably only intended to puzzle the old man. "The natural reason," says Moberly, "would have been, 'For some time I shall be as old as you are now' (and, therefore, I take such sayings as proleptically personal). But Hamlet turns it to the opposite."

203. **method**, a certain orderliness

204. **out of the air**, out into the air.

206. **pregnant**, full of point.

207. **a happiness**, a happy, felicitous turn of expression.

208. **hits on**, lights on by accident.

208, 9. **could not .. of**, could not manage to express so pointedly and neatly.

210. **means ... daughter**, measures by which he and my daughter shall be brought together.

213. **withal**, the emphatic form of *with*, always in Shakespeare at the end of the sentence. See Abb. § 196.

216. **These tedious old fools!** Relieved of the empty verbiage of the old man, Hamlet at once returns to his natural self, though ready to assume his "antic disposition" at the appearance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

222, 3. **Good lads, .. both?** my fine fellows, how are you both?

224. **As the . earth**, as men whose lot on earth is in neither extreme.

225. **Happy ... happy**, happy in the fact that we are not at such a dizzy height of fortune that we need fear a sudden fall; a button being often placed at the top of the cap where the seams meet.

231. **Then is doomsday near**, then must the end of the world, the day of judgement be at hand.

232. **more in particular**, more closely as to the particulars of your situation.

237. **Then is the world one**, then must the whole world be a prison, if Denmark, so happy and free, is one.

238. **confines**, chambers in which the lunatics are shut up; more usually in the sense of boundaries, limits.

239. **wards**, cells.

242. **but thinking .. so**, unless it is made so by thinking it to be good or bad.

244. **your ambition ... one**, it seems to you so because you are too ambitious to be satisfied with your own subordinate position; an attempt to sound Hamlet as to the cause of his discontent.

246. **I could ... nutshell**, I could easily be satisfied with the narrowest limits.

249, 50. **for the very ... dream**, for that on which the ambitious feed their minds is even less substantial than a dream, it being merely the reflection of a dream.

254, 5. **Then are .. shadows**, in that case (*sc.* if ambition is of so airy and light a quality), since it is only our monarchs and heroes who "bestride the narrow world like a Colossus" (*J. C.*

i. 2. 134, 5), what are ambitious, it follows that our beggars (who are the antitypes of the monarchs and heroes) must be the true bodies (the really substantial existences) of which the monarchs and heroes are but the shadows: **shall we to**, *sc.* go; the verb of motion being omitted, as frequently.

256. **fay**, "'a corruption probably of the French *foi*, which in its earlier forms was *feid*, *feit*, *fey*, *fé*, or it may be a corruption of 'faith'" ... (Cl. Pr. Edd.). The former seems to be the more probable origin.

257. **We'll wait upon you**, we will attend you thither.

258. **No such matter**, I cannot allow of that, *sc.* of your waiting upon me; taking the words in a more literal sense than was intended by the speakers.

258-60. **I will .. attended**, I will not put you on a level with the rest of my servants, for, to tell you the truth, I am very badly served, those servants of mine are a bad lot; said as if he were confiding to them some strange and important secret the telling of which needed the assurance that he was speaking the honest truth.

260, 1. **But, ... Elsinore**? but, to ask you in the ordinary way of friendship, to ask you a question usual among friends, what has brought you to Elsinore?

262. **occasion**, cause, motive.

263. **Beggar .. thanks**, so utterly a beggar am I that I have hardly thanks to give you: **but I thank you**, still I do thank you.

264, 5. **my thanks .. halfpenny**, the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare Chaucer, *C. T.* 8875, "dere y-nough a jane" (*i.e.* a small coin of Genoa), and 12723, "deere y-nough a leeke." Also, *A. Y. L.* ii. 3. 74, "too late a week": **Were ... for**? I fancy you were sent for by the king (in order that you, as my old and intimate acquaintances, might find out what was the matter with me).

265, 6. **Is it ... inclining**? did you come of your own accord?

266. **Is it ... visitation**? have you come to visit me of your own free will?

267. **nay, speak**, nay, do not hesitate, but speak out.

268. **should we say**, ought we to say; do you wish us to say?

269. **Why ... purpose**, an intentionally enigmatical sentence which might bear either of two meanings, (1) say anything so long as it is to the point, (2) say anything except what is to the point. Hamlet has divined clearly enough the reason of this sudden appearance of his old companions.

270-2. **there is ... colour**, I can see in your looks a sort of confession which your natural ingenuousness prevents you from dis-

guising as you would do if you were more crafty; for **colour**, cp. below, iii. 1. 45, and i. *H. IV.* i 3. 109, "Never did base and rotten policy *Colour* her working with such deadly wounds."

273. **To what end**, with what object.

274. **That . . me**, nay, that is for you to tell me, not for me to guess.

275-8. **by the rights . . . no?** by the claims which our long friendship give me, by the fact of our having been brought up together in such close companionship, by the ties of affection which have ever bound us to one another, and by anything even more sacred to which a more skilful advocate could persuasively appeal, tell me in plain and straightforward terms whether, etc. For **consonancy**, cp. *T. N.* ii. 5. 141, "There is no *consonancy* in the sequel."

280. **Nay, then . . . you**, ah, if you hesitate and whisper together, I see plainly there is something you wish to hide; my eye is upon you and you cannot deceive me. Steevens explains **an eye of you** as "a glimpse of your meaning," but surely Hamlet has a good deal more than a 'glimpse.' For **of**, = on, see Abb. § 174.

281. **hold not off**, do not keep aloof from me (figuratively), do not hesitate to speak out plainly.

283. **I will tell you why**, I know that, and will tell you with what object.

283-5. **so shall . . feather**, by forestalling you in explaining with what object you were sent for, I shall save you from revealing it yourselves, and your good faith to the king and queen, which binds you to secrecy in the matter, will not suffer in the smallest particular; **prevent**, go before and so hinder (put behind, stop); **discovery**, cp. *H. V.* ii. 2. 162, "Never did faithful subject more rejoice At the *discovery* (*i.e.* exposure) of most dangerous treason"; **moult no feather**, literally lose none of its feathers, as birds do at certain seasons of the year; **moult**, ultimately from Lat. *mutare*, to change.

286. **forgone . exercises**, completely abandoned all those exercises which were customary with me; such as fencing, horsemanship, etc. For **exercises**, in this sense, cp. *K. J.* iv. 2. 60, "deny his youth The rich advantage of good *exercise*?"

287. **it goes . . disposition**, it fares so sadly with the tone of my mind, my mood has become so desponding.

288, 9. **most excellent canopy**, supremely beautiful covering; **canopy** has a strange origin, it being from the "Gk. κωνωπεῖον, κωνώπειον, an Egytian bed with mosquito curtains—Gk. κωνωπ-, stem of κώνωψ, a gnat, mosquito; literally 'cone-faced,' or an animal with a cone-shaped head, from some fancied resemblance

to a cone.—Gk. κῶνος, a cone; and ὤψ, a face" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*); **brave**, glorious, splendid.

290. **fretted**, ornamented; A.S. *frætwan*, *frætwian*, to adorn; cp. *Cymb.* ii. 4. 88, "The roof o' the chamber With golden cherubins is *fretted*."

292. **What a piece**, *i.e.* what a *wonderful* piece.

293. **in reason**, in the matter of reason: **faculty**, mental power, literally, facility in acting.

294. **moving**, movement, carriage of the body: **express**, "exact, fitted to its purpose, as the seal fits the stamp" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

294, 5. **the beauty of the world**, the supreme excellence of creation; **the paragon of animals**, peerless among things endowed with life; **paragon**, "a model of excellence... A singular word, owing its origin to two prepositions united in a phrase.—Span. *para*, *con*, in comparison with ... Span. *para*, for, to, towards, which is itself a compound preposition answering to O. Span. *pora*, from Lat. *pro*, *ad*, and *con*, with, from Lat. *cum*, with. Thus it is really equivalent to the three Lat. prepositions *pro*, *ad*, *cum*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Marston, *The Malcontent*, i. 1. 349-52, parodies this passage in describing women.

297. **quintessence**, literally the fifth essence, the pure essence of anything. "Aristoteles ..hath put down ... for elements, foure; and for a fifth, *quintessence*, the heavenly body which is immutable" (Holland, translation of Plutarch, quoted by Skeat).

299. **no such stuff**, nothing of the kind; my mind was not filled with any such thought.

302. **To think**, at the thought; the indefinite infinitive; see Abb. § 356.

303. **lenten entertainment**, poor, scanty, welcome; from the spare diet prescribed during the fast of Lent. Cp. *T. N.* i. 5. 9, "A good *lenten* answer."

304. **coted**, overtook and passed; the word in the "technical sense is applied to a brace of greyhounds slipped together at the stag or hare, and means that one of the dogs outstrips the other and reaches the game first"... (*Ed. Rev.*, Oct. 1872).

307. **shall have ... me**, shall receive from me the tribute of applause, as a king receives tribute of money, etc.; **the adventurous knight**, the knight-errant who goes in quest of adventures.

308. **shall use...target**, shall have full opportunity of displaying his valour; **the lover ... gratis**, the lover shall be rewarded for playing his pathetic part.

309. **the humorous ... peace**, the capricious man shall have his full opportunity of venting his spleen.

310. **tickle o' the sere**, "The *sere* of a gun-lock is the bar on balance lever interposed between the trigger on the one side, and the tumbler and other mechanism on the other, and is so called from its acting the part of a serre, or talon, in gripping that mechanism and preventing its action ... Now ... this sear ... may be so tickle or ticklish in its adjustment that a slight touch, or even jar may displace it, and then, of course, the gun goes off. Hence 'light,' or 'tickle of the sear' ... applied metaphorically, means that which can be started into action at a mere touch, or on the slightest provocation, or on what ought to be no provocation at all" (Nicholson). Here, ready to laugh at the smallest joke.

311, 2. **the lady ... for 't**, the lady shall talk as freely as she likes, or the fault of her not doing so shall lie in the halting character of the blank verse.

314. **city**, by this word "Shakespeare's public at once understood London" (Delius).

315. **travel**, are 'on a tour in the provinces,' as we should now say.

315, 6. **their residence ... ways**, it would be better for them, as regards both fame and profit, if they stayed in the capital.

317, 8. **I think ... innovation**, Steevens explains, "Rosencrantz means that their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away in consequence of the new custom of introducing personal abuse into their comedies. Several companies of actors in the time of Shakespeare were silenced on account of this licentious practice." This explanation is questioned by the Cl. Pr. Edd., who in a very full discussion of the point (*Introduction*, pp. xiii.-xv.) show that for a very long period there had been a strong opposition in the city to theatrical performances. Inhibitions, or refusals to license theatres, had occurred in 1573, 1574, 1575, 1581, 1589, 1590, 1597, and other measures to restrain the abuses of the actors had been taken during the period. "It is difficult therefore," continue the editors, "to see at what precise period the explanation offered by Steevens could be true. In 1604 the indulgence of the actors in personal abuse could hardly be called an 'innovation'; on the contrary, it was a practice from which the stage had never been entirely free." They therefore conjecture that the 'innovation' may refer to the authority given to the children to act at the regularly licensed theatres, a permission which might have operated as an 'inhibition' upon the older actors by driving them into the country. They also point out that nothing is said about 'inhibition' or 'innovation' in the quarto of 1603, the first mention of the words being in the quarto of 1604, and "it is to the interval therefore that we must look for the explanation."

319. **do they . estimation,** are they held in the same esteem as, etc.

320. **so followed,** so much run after.

322. **Do they grow rusty?** is their acting less sprightly than before? have their powers of acting grown rusty by want of exercise?

323. **Nay, ... pace,** not in the least, they take just as much pains to please.

324. **aery,** nest; from "Low Lat. *area*, a nest of a bird of prey" .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*); so Shakespeare speaks of a "*nest* of traitors," *W. T.* ii. 3. 81; "a *nest* of hollow bosoms," *H. V.* ii. *Chor.* 21: **eyases,** young hawks; "*Niais*, a neastling, a young bird taken out of a neast; hence a youngling, novice, etc., Cotgrave" (Dyce). Capell says "these children were so called from their eagerness, and their flying at game above them."

324, 5. **cry ... question,** probably means 'declaim at the top of their shrill, querulous voices'; as though their speeches were one perpetual shriek of interrogation: **tyrannically clapped,** fiercely applauded.

326-8. **and so ... thither,** and make such an uproar on the common stages (*i.e.* the stages occupied by the ordinary player) —as they contemptuously call them—that many of man's estate (as shown by their wearing swords) are afraid to face these pigmies whose only weapon is a goose-quill (*i.e.* that are merely armed with the words put into their mouths by the play-writers); **berattle,** the prefix is intensive, and **berattle the stages** is an expression like 'be-thump the pulpit cushion,' though there may be in it the figurative sense of vociferous crying down the ordinary players.

330. **escoted,** paid; "'*Escot*, A shot .. *Escotter*, Everyone to pay his shot,' etc., Cotgrave" (Dyce): **quality,** profession of acting; as frequently in Massinger.

331-4. **will they not ... succession?** will they not hereafter say, when they come to be men and are obliged to content themselves with being ordinary actors (such as they now despise)—which in all probability is what will happen to them, unless they find some more lucrative occupation—that the authors whose plays they act, by putting such words into their mouths, are doing them a wrong in making them call out against that very occupation they must inherit? After **will they afterwards** we should expect *did* **them wrong.**

335-8. **'Faith ... question,** indeed, there has already been much dispute on this point, and both sides have been pretty actively engaged, the children and the ordinary actors each attacking the

other, while the nation is not ashamed to fan the flame of the quarrel; to such an extent has this gone on that for a time the stage companies would give nothing for argument in a play unless in the dialogue poet and player were ready to belabour one another, the poet running down the ordinary actor and the ordinary actor retaliating on the poet, *i.e.* the poet was called upon by those who employed him to dramatize the quarrel, himself representing one side and the ordinary actor the other. For **went to cuffs**, cp. i. *H. IV.* ii. 3. 35, "I could divide myself and *go to buffets*," *i.e.* fight one hand against the other. Delius and Schmidt take **argument** as 'plot of the drama,' but in all the other passages in Shakespeare in which the word is used in this sense it has either the article or a pronominal adjective before it; **tarre**, cp. *K. J.* iv. 1. 117, "And like a dog ... Snatch at his master that doth *tarre* him on"; an old verb from A.S. *tergan*, *tyrgan*, to irritate.

340. **much . . brains**, plenty of lively fighting.

341. **carry it away**, come off best in their rivalry with the older players.

342. **that they do**, assuredly they do; an emphatic assent. **Hercules ... too**, most completely; Steevens thinks there may be an allusion to the Globe theatre, the sign of which was Hercules carrying the globe.

343. **It is ... strange**, there is nothing very strange in this change of fashion.

343, 4. **for mine ... that**, *i.e.* for now that my uncle is king, those that, etc.; **mows**, grimaces; F. *moue*, a thrusting out of the lips.

346. **a-piece**, each as his share; literally *on piece*, as *a-bed*, *asleep*, etc.: **in little**, in miniature: **'Sblood** (by) God's blood, *i.e.* as taken in the eucharist; so *'zounds*, or *'swounds*, God's wounds; *'slife*, God's life; *'sbody*, God's body.

347. **if philosophy ... out**, if philosophy, which is so proud of its achievements, could only find it out.

350-1. **come then**, *i.e.* do not hesitate to shake hands with me: **the appurtenance ... ceremony**, ceremonious courtesy is an essential part of welcome; for similar formalities of welcome, cp. *Macb.* iii. 3. 32-5.

351-3. **let me comply ... yours**, let me show courtesy to you by the outward formality of shaking hands, lest in that welcome which I shall hold out to the players,—a courtesy that must be evidenced by formal civilities,—I should seem to be giving them a warmer reception than I do to you. Singer takes **comply** here; and in v. 2. 176, for 'embrace.'

357. **I am north-north-west**, I am mad only in one quarter of my mental compass.

when the wind .. handsaw, when the wind is southerly with me (*i.e.* not in the quarter in which alone I am mad) I can distinguish between a hawk and a heron. Heath, quoted by the Cl. Pr. Edd., explains as follows; "The expression obviously refers to the sport of hawking. Most birds, especially one of heavy flight like the heron, when roused by the falconer or his dog, would fly down, or with the wind in order to escape. When the wind is from the north, the heron flies towards the south, and the spectator may be dazzled by the sun, and be unable to distinguish the hawk from the heron. On the other hand, when the wind is southerly, the heron flies towards the north, and it and the pursuing hawk are clearly seen by the sportsman, who has then his back to the sun, and without difficulty knows the hawk from the hernsew" .. The Cl. Pr. Edd. add that in Suffolk and Norfolk 'hernsew' is pronounced 'harnsa,' from which to 'handsaw' is but a single step.

359. **Well be with you**, may things be well with you; probably a piece of Polonius' pedantic affectation.

360, 1. **at each ... hearer**, a curious way of saying 'let each of you lend me an ear,' *i.e.* listen to me.

362. **swaddling-clouts**, the clothes in which infants are swathed or enwrapped.

363. **Happily**, possibly, perhaps; see Abb. § 42.

364. **an old . . child**, so we speak of extreme old age as second childhood.

366, 7. **You say ... indeed**, it is just as you say; it did happen on Monday morning: said merely to prevent Polonius from guessing that they had been talking about him.

369. **My lord .. you**, nay, my lord (mimicking his address), first hear what I have to say; **you**, emphatic.

372. **Buz, buz!** nonsense, nonsense! probably, as Steevens says, "only interjections employed to interrupt Polonius," or rather, perhaps, to disconcert him.

374. **Then came ... ass,—**, probably a line from an old ballad.

377, 8. **scene ... unlimited**, the former "refers to dramas that carefully observed the unity of Place"; the latter "to those that disregarded such restrictions" (Delius).

379. **For the law ... liberty**, for those plays in which the laws of dramatic composition are observed, and equally for those which are a law unto themselves, allow themselves every kind of licence, these, etc. This seems to be the meaning of the text, if genuine; but no example of **writ** = that which is written; has yet

been cited. Of course, '*a* writ,' '*the* writ,' '*that* writ,' etc., are common enough; but Walker's criticism is undeniable when he says "It is as if we should say, *the laws of poem* for *the laws of poetry*...or *the genius of ode* meaning *the genius of lyrical composition*." He reads *wit*, and points out that the same error occurs in *J. C.* iii. 2. 225.

381. **Jephthah,** one of the twelve judges of Israel, when it was under that form of government, who, going to fight against the Ammonites, vowed that if successful against them, he would sacrifice to the Lord the first thing that met him on his return home. His daughter coming out to welcome him, was accordingly offered up.. See *Judges*, xi. 30-40; and Tennyson, *Dream of Fair Women*, 180-244.

385, 6. **'One fair ... well,'** from an old ballad on the subject published in Percy's *Reliques*, in 1757.

387. **Still on my daughter,** still thinking of my daughter; cp. above ll. 186, 7.

389, 90. **If you ... well,** if by Jephthah you mean me, I, like him have a daughter whom I love most dearly; **passing,** surpassingly, exceedingly.

391. **Nay, that follows not,** Hamlet uses *follows* in an ambiguous sense, (1) that is not a necessary consequence, (2) those are not the words that follow in the ballad; and when Polonius takes them in the former sense, Hamlet replies in the latter.

397, 8. **the first row ... comes,** the first verse of the pious (*i.e.* scriptural) ballad will tell you more, and to that I must leave you, for see, there come those who interrupt me. Though **abridgement** is used in *M. N. D.* v. 1. 39, for a pastime, a dramatic entertainment, and there may here be an allusion to the same sense, it is doubtful whether it means anything more than 'that which cuts short what I was about to say.' The reading of the folios, 'abridgements,' seems against the double sense.

401. **is valanced,** has become fringed with a beard; the 'valance' in the beds of former days was the drapery which hung from the bedstaff to the ground; the word is supposed to be derived from Valence, in France, not far from Lyons, a city still celebrated for its silks: **to beard me,** to defy me; of course said jestingly.

402. **What, ... mistress!** what, is that you, my young lady whom I remember so well? **By'r lady,** by our lady, *i.e.* the Virgin Mary. Until after the Restoration women's parts were acted by men.

404. **chopine,** 'chopines,' or 'chapineys,' as Coryat calls them, were contrivances of wood covered with leather which ladies, especially those of Venice, wore under the shoe to add to their

height. Furness mentions that he was present at a Jewish wedding in Jerusalem, in 1856, when the young bride, aged twelve, wore chopines at least ten inches high.

405. **cracked within the ring,** *i.e.* cracked beyond all use; coins cracked within the ring running round them were no longer current. The voice is said to *crack* when, at the age of puberty it gradually passes from the "childish treble" (*A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 162) to a more manly fulness, having during the transition a cracked sound. Cp. *Cymb.* iv. 2. 236, "though now our voices Have got the mannish *crack*"; *M. V.* iii. 4. 66, "And speak between the change of man and boy With a reed voice," *i.e.* shrill as the note of a reed.

406, 7. **We'll e'en .. see,** we will set to work upon some dramatic performance or other, whatever may come most readily for the moment. This has been taken as a sneer at French sportsmanship, but Tollet quotes Sir T. Browne that "The French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe," and the Cl. Pr. Edd. add a passage from the same author in which is mentioned a falcon of Henry of Navarre "which Scaliger saith, he saw strike down a buzzard, two wild geese, divers kites, a crane and a swan."

408. **give us .. quality,** give us a specimen of your capabilities; not here, I think, used in the technical sense of profession, as in l. 329 above.

413. **the million,** the multitude.

413, 4. **'twas .. general,** it was a delicacy not appreciated by the common herd of play-goers; **caviare,** the preserved roe of the sturgeon, a delicacy new in Shakespeare's day, and not generally relished; **general,** cp. *M. M.* ii. 4. 27, "and even so The *general,* subject to a well-wish'd king, Quit their own part"; *J. C.* ii. 1. 12, "I know no personal cause to spurn at him, But for the *general,*" *i.e.* except for the people at large; **as I received it,** in my opinion.

415. **cried ... mine,** were of greater weight than mine; outwent mine in authority. Henley says, "To *over-top* is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry," *i.e.* pack.

416. **well ... scenes,** the scenes of which were well arranged.

417. **modesty,** propriety: **cunning,** skill: **one said,** it was said by somebody.

418. **no sallets ... savoury,** nothing piquant to give the lines a relish; no indecencies to suit vicious tastes; **sallets,** another form of *salads,* preparations of garden green-stuff, mixed with oil, vinegar, mustard, etc., and used as a relish with meat.

418-20. **nor no . . affection**, nothing in the language which could charge the author with affectation; **affection** is the reading of the quartos here, as of the quartos and the first folio in *L. L. L.* v. 1. 4, "Your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without *affection*" (a passage closely resembling our text); and in *T. N.* ii. 3. 160, Malvolio is called "an *affectioned* (*i.e.* affected) ass"; the folios here give *affectation*, and that form is found in *L. L. L.* v. 2. 407: **as wholesome as sweet**, equally healthy in tone and pleasant.

421. **by very .. fine**, with a very great deal more of real beauty in it than of tawdry splendour; "rich not gaudy," as Polonius recommends that Laertes' dress should be, i. 2. 71: **one speech**, see Introduction.

422. **thereabout of it**, about that part in it.

426. **Hyrcanian beast**, *i.e.* the tiger. Hyrcania, a province of the ancient Persian empire, on the south and south-east of the Caspian or Hyrcanian Sea, is frequently mentioned in old English writers as the habitat of tigers, the Hyrcan tiger being by them regarded, like the Bengal tiger of to-day, as the symbol of deadliest ferocity. Cp. *Macb.* iii. 4. 101, *M. V.* ii. 7. 41.

428. **sable**, see note on i. 2. 242.

430. **couched ... horse**, Pyrrhus, or Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, was one of the band of heroes who concealed themselves in a wooden horse they had constructed, and which Sinon induced the Trojans to receive within their gates. In the side of this horse was a door which Sinon at nightfall unlocked, and his fellow Greeks being let out opened the gates of the city and with the rest of the Grecian army sacked Troy.

432. **With heraldry more dismal**, with a tincture (as it is called in heraldry) of more dismal colour.

433. **total gules**, one mass of blood; from "F. *gueules*, 'gules, red, or sanguine, in blazon,' Cotgrave ... This word is nothing but the plural of F. *gueule*, the mouth .. though the reason for the name is not very clear, unless the reference be (as is probable) to the colour of the open mouth of the (heraldic) lion. — Lat. *gula*, the throat" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **trick'd**, smeared; cp. Jonson, *The Poetaster*, i. 1, "there they are *trick'd*, they and their pedigrees"; *i.e.* have their coat of arms drawn with a pen.

435. **Baked .. streets**, which (*sc.* the blood) was caked into a thick crust by the heat of the streets; the city having been set on fire by the Greeks.

436, 7. **That lend ... murders**, which by their accursed light give the Greeks a cruel opportunity for their, etc. For **vile**, of the folios, the quartos give *lord's*, which is objectionable as Priam's murder is afterwards mentioned, and, of course, was

not the only murder: **roasted** ... **fire,** ablaze with wrath and fire.

438. **o'er-sized**, smeared over as with size; a gluey substance: **coagulate gore,** blood curdled by the heat.

439. **like carbuncles,** as crimson as carbuncles.

441. **So, proceed you,** go on from that point.

445. **Striking** .. **Greeks,** unable to reach his opponents with his sword.

446. **Rebellious to his arm,** refusing to obey his arm; *i.e.* his arm being too weak to wield it.

447. **unequal match'd,** in the strength of his youth more than a match for the old man; **unequal,** used adverbially; see Abb. § 1.

448. **in rage strikes wide,** in his fury misses his blow.

449. **But with the whiff,** with the mere whiff.

450. **unnerved,** *sc.* by bodily weakness: **senseless,** though, as a material thing, without feeling.

452. **his,** its.

453. **Takes** ... **ear,** so stuns him that his action is arrested.

454. **declining,** about to fall upon: **milky,** milk-white with age.

456. **as a** ... **tyrant,** like the figure of a tyrant in the old tapestry hangings; cp *Macb.* v. 8. 23-5, for a similar image, "We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are, Painted upon a pole, and underwrit, 'Here you may see the *tyrant.*'"

457. **And like** ... **matter,** and like one who inclines neither to one party nor to the other; his **will,** being one party, **matter,** the stroke of his sword, the other.

459. **against,** in anticipation of, shortly before; see Abb. § 142, and cp. i. 1. 158 above, and iii. 3. 30 below.

460. **the rack,** "a mass of vapoury clouds. So Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum,* § 115, 'The winds in the upper region, which move the clouds above (which we call the *rack*)'" (Dyce).

462. **hush,** hushed, silent; see Abb. § 22.

463. **the region,** "originally a division of the sky marked out by the Roman augurs. In later times the atmosphere was divided into three regions, upper, middle, and lower. By Shakespeare the word is used to denote the air generally" (Cl. Pr. Edd.). So *climate* from meaning the region of the earth lying in the same parallel of latitude, has come to mean the condition of a region as regards its atmospheric phenomena.

464. **Aroused** ... **a-work,** his vengeance stirred to double fury by the pause he had been constrained to make.

465. **Cyclops'**, the Cyclops were Titans, sons of Uranus (heaven) and Ge (earth), who, as the assistants of Hephæstus (Vulcan), forged armour, etc., for the gods and heroes.

466. **forged ... eterne**, so forged as to be for ever proof against all strain put upon them; cp. *Cymb.* v. 5. 5, "whose naked breasts, Stepp'd before targes of *proof*"; and see note on iv. 7. 154, below.

467. **remorse**, pity; as usually in Shakespeare, not the regret felt for some ill doing, the only modern sense.

470. **In general synod**, assembled in full conclave; their decision being thus made more solemn.

471. **fellies**, or *felloes*, the outer circumference of the wheel put together in separate parts and confined by the tire; from A.S. *feolan*, to stick.

472. **the nave**, the central portion of the wheel through which the axle passes and the spokes radiate.

475. **Its ball ... beard**, it, like your beard, shall pay a visit to the barber's shop.

476. **he 's for a jig**, he (*sc.* Polonius) would prefer a jig, *i.e.* a ludicrous composition in verse, something that he could laugh at: **or he sleeps**, or he is drowsy, and does not care to be awakened by anything so stirring in character.

478. **mobled queen**, queen muffled up in a cap; the word *mob-cap*, as Coleridge points out, is still used of a large cap, worn more commonly by old women of the lower classes in the early morning, and differing but little from a night-cap. The picture is of the aged Hecuba roused up from bed by the alarm of fire.

480. **that 's good**, Polonius, who had objected to "beautified" (l. 109 above) as "a vile phrase," speaks with patronizing approval of this affected expression.

481, 2 **threatening ... rheum**, threatening the flames that she will put them out with her blinding tears; **bisson**, literally purblind, as in *Cor.* ii. 1. 70, "your *bisson* conspectuities": **clout**, a piece of cloth, which she has snatched up in her hurry; used contemptuously.

483. **for**, in place of.

484. **o'erteemed loins**, "exhausted by child-bearing" (Cl. Pr. Edd.). Priam was said to have had fifty-two children by her.

486. **Who this had seen**, any one who had witnessed so sad a spectacle as this.

487. **'Gainst ... pronounced**, would have railed against the majesty of Fortune in the most treasonable language; cp. *A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 16, "And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms."

492. **Unless .. all**, unless, as philosophers say, they are utterly indifferent to the concerns of men.

493. **Would have . heaven**, would have drawn tears from the burning eyes of heaven, as milk is drawn from the udder of a cow ; **milch**, milky ; a '*milch*-cow ' is still in common use.

494. **And passion . gods**, and would have excited deep compassion in the gods.

495, 6. **Look, .. eyes**, see if he (*sc.* the player) has not turned pale, and if the tears are not ready to fall from his eyes, he having entered so thoroughly into the pathos of the scene.

497. **speak out the rest**, complete the speech.

498. **well bestowed**, comfortably lodged.

499, 500. **the abstracts . time**, the compendium in which the events of the time are summarized ; the quartos give *abstract*, but the adjective is nowhere else found in Shakespeare.

500, 1. **you were better have**, it would be better for you to have ; for this ungrammatical remnant of ancient usage, see Abb. § 230.

502. **I will use ... desert**, I will treat them as men in their station of life deserve to be treated

503. **God's bodykins**, by God's little body ; an affectionately irreverent adjuration ; cp. "od's pittikins," *Cymb.* iv. 2. 293 ; "od's heartlings," *M. W.* iii. 2. 49 ; "od's my little life," *A. Y. L.* iii. 5. 43.

504. **after**, according to : **who should**, *i.e.* nobody would.

505. **after your ... dignity**, with such courtesy and condescension as befits a man in your high position.

505, 6. **the less ... bounty**, cp. *M. N. D.* v. 1. 89-92.

512. **for a need**, if it was necessary.

513. **a speech ... lines**, see note on iii. 2. 182.

521. **peasant slave**, wretched bondman.

523. **But in .. passion**, under the influence of nothing more real than a poet's creation, a mere imaginary passion.

524. **Could force ... conceit**, could so constrain his soul into sympathy with the idea which he had made his own in interpreting it.

525. **That from ... wann'd**, that, from the emotion of his soul, his face became pale ; cp. above l. 495.

526. **Tears ... aspect**, that tears showed themselves in his eyes, frenzy possessed his looks.

527, 8. **A broken ... conceit**, that his voice became broken with sobs, and all the faculties of his body took shape from the idea

in his mind. The various particulars of his emotion are generalized in the last clause.

530, 1. **What's Hecuba . . her?** what relation is there between Hecuba and him that he should so sympathize with her woes? *i.e.* there is no such relation.

532. **cue,** indication, prompting; literally the last words in the player's acting copy of the speech preceding that which the player is himself to deliver; according to some from Q, the first letter of the Lat. *quando*, when, showing when the actor was to enter and speak, according to others from the F. *queue*, a tail.

534. **And cleave . . speech,** and split the ears of his audience with the horror of his words.

535. **Make mad . . free,** drive those conscious of guilt to downright madness, and fill with terror even those whose conscience was clear of guilt; for **free,** cp. iii. 2. 235.

536, 7. **Confound . . ears,** utterly bewilder the ignorant, and so amaze spectators and hearers that they would not know whether their faculties were their own, whether they were not under some horrible hallucination.

539. **muddy-mettled,** dull-brained, sluggish-natured; for a similar metaphor, cp. *M. V.* i. 1. 88, 9, "a sort of men whose visages Do cream and mantle like a standing pond"; for **mettled,** see note on i. 1. 96: **peak,** allow my resolution to fade into nothing; more usually of physical dwindling away; cp. *Macb.* i. 3. 23, "Weary se'nnights nine times nine Shall he dwindle, *peak* and pine."

540. **John-a-dreams,** *i.e.* John of dreams, = a sluggish, sleepy, fellow; cp. *Jack-a-lent*, *Jack-a-lantern*, *Jack-an-apes*, etc. Collier quotes Armin's *Nest of Ninnies*, 1608, "His name is John, indeede, saies the cinnick; but neither John a nods, nor *John a dreames*, yet either as you take it": **unpregnant of my cause,** with my mind utterly barren of all designs to effect my purpose; with a mind that as yet has conceived no method of action; cp. *Lear*, ii. 6. 229, "Who, by the act of known and feeling sorrows, Am *pregnant* to good pity."

542. **property,** everything that belonged to him; cp. above, i. 5. 75, "Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd."

543. **A damn'd . . . made,** ruin was brought down by most accursed means. Steevens compares Chapman's *Revenge for Honour*, i. 1, "That he meantime might *make a sure defeat* On our aged father's *life and empire*." Cp. also v. 2. 58, below.

544. **Who calls me villain?** does any one call me villain? *i.e.* any one might do so without fear of consequences, for, as he says

below, l. 549, I should meekly accept the insult: **breaks ... across**? breaks my head from one side to the other; perhaps with an allusion to the clumsiness of those who in tilting broke their spear across the body of their antagonist and not by a direct thrust, as in *A. W.* ii. 2. 20, "*King.* I would I had; so I had broke thy pate, And ask'd thy mercy for 't. *Lafeu.* Good faith, *across.*"

545. **blows it in my face**, gives it to the wind to blow it into my face, thus adding to the insult of plucking it out.

546. **Tweaks**, pulls; a word always used in a contemptuous sense

546, 7. **gives me .. lungs**, there were various gradations of giving the lie; as the simple "Thou liest"; then "Thou liest in the throat"; "Thou liest in the throat like a rogue"; "Thou liest in the throat like a rogue as thou art"; here the lie is given deeper still, in the lungs; **who does me this**? is there any one who does this to me? for the old dative thus used see Abb. § 220.

549. **'Swounds, I should take it**, by God's wounds (*i.e.* those inflicted upon Christ in His crucifixion), I should accept the insult without retaliating.

549-51. **for it .. bitter**, for clearly I must have the liver of a pigeon (*i.e.* be no more courageous than the timid pigeon), and be utterly wanting in that spirit which feels and resents an injury; the liver was of old supposed to be the seat of courage, passion, love, etc.; for **gall**, cp. *T. C.* i 3. 237, *H. V.* ii. 2. 30.

552. **fatted**, fattened: **all the region kites**, all the kites of this part of the country, see note on l. 463, above.

553. **offal**, refuse: ... "formerly used of chips of wood falling from a cut log; and .. merely compounded of *off* and *fall* .." (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

554. **Remorseless**, pitiless; see note on l. 467, above: **kindless**, without natural feeling.

556. **most brave**, said ironically.

558. **by heaven and hell**, by heaven, as shown by the prodigies seen; by hell, in its sending the spirit of the dead king to stir me up.

559. **Must ... words**, cannot help exhibiting my fury in mere words; **unpack**, an allusion to peddlers opening their packs and displaying their wares.

560. **a-cursing**, *i.e.* on cursing; see Abb. § 24.

561. **A scullion**, a sharp-tongued kitchen-wench.

562. **About, my brain**! be active, my brain! stir yourself to some design!

563. **sitting at a play,** Todd gives one such story from *A Warning for Faire Women*, 1599, and the Cl. Pr. Edd. refer to Massinger's *Roman Actor*, ii. 1.

564. **cunning,** skill with which the scene was portrayed.

565. **to the soul,** cp. l. 571, "tented *to* the quick": **presently,** at once.

567, 8. **will speak ... organ,** will make itself known by most miraculous means; cp. *Temp.* iii. 3. 96-9, "Methought the billows spoke and told me of it; The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder, That deep and dreadful *organ*-pipe, pronounced The name of Prosper; it did bass my trespass"; also *Macb.* iii. 4. 122-6.

571. **I'll tent ... quick,** I'll probe him to the sensitive point; **tent,** "to search with a tent, which was a roll of lint for searching or cleansing a wound or sore" (Dyce): **the quick,** the living, sensitive, part: **blench,** shrink.

572. **I know my course,** I shall at once know how to proceed; the present tense indicates the instantaneous knowledge which will then be his.

575. **Out of,** by means of.

576. **As he is . . spirits,** for such spirits are allies which he turns to the fullest use.

577. **Abuses ... me,** misleads me with the object of making me commit some great crime which will consign me to perdition.

578. **more relative,** more pertinent, and so more conclusive.

579. **catch,** snare.

ACT III SCENE I.

1. **drift of circumstance,** "roundabout method. 'Drift' occurs in ii. 1. 10, and 'circumstance' in this same sense, in i. 5. 127, and the two words in *T. C.* iii 3. 113, 4, 'I do not strain at the position, — ... but at the author's *drift*; Who in his *circumstance* expressly proves,'" etc. (Cl. Pr. Edd.). Cp. also iii. 3. 83, below.

2. **Get from him ... confusion,** find out from him what has led him to behave in this excited manner; cp. *T. C.* ii. 3. 135, "the savage strangeness he *puts on*": *J. C.* i. 3. 60, "And *put on* fear and cast yourself in wonder": in neither of which passages is there any idea of making a pretence. Schmidt takes **puts on** as = incite, instigate, but the two next lines show that the confusion refers to Hamlet himself only.

3, 4. **Grating ... lunacy,** thus disturbing his peaceful life with outbursts of dangerous madness; the figurative sense of **grating** is from the literal sense of two bodies roughly rubbing against each other, as in i. *H. IV.* iii. 1. 132, "Or a dry wheel *grate* on the axle-tree."

6. **he will ... speak,** he cannot by any method be persuaded to say.

7. **forward to be sounded,** inclined to let us find out what is at the bottom of his mind.

8. **But, with .. aloof,** but with a cunning such as is seen in mad people holds us at a distance.

11. **Most like a gentleman,** with the greatest courtesy.

12. **But with ... disposition,** though he was evidently very ill inclined to have much to do with us.

13, 4. **Niggard ... reply,** if **question** is used in its ordinary sense, this statement is not true, for Hamlet had plied them well with questions of various kinds, whereas they can scarcely be said to have made any **demands** of him. Warburton therefore would transpose **Niggard** and **Most free**. Against this it may be urged that Hamlet could not be said to be niggard of his answers when none were required of him. Malone and others take **question** as = conversation, discourse, a sense which it often bears in Shakespeare. But here again we are as far from the fact as ever, for Hamlet conversed with them freely on a variety of subjects. The real explanation seems to me that suggested by the Cl. Pr. Edd., that "perhaps they did not intend to give a correct account of the interview." *Possibly* after Hamlet's generous forbearance in not forcing them to a confession as to the reason of their coming, they may have felt some scruples of delicacy in betraying what they knew; *probably* they felt that if they reported much of the conversation it would be discovered how completely Hamlet had seen through them, what poor diplomatists they had shown themselves: **of our demands,** as regarded our demands; see Abb. § 173.

14, 5. **Did you .. pastime?** did you test him as regards his inclination to take part in any amusement? Cp. *M. M.* i. 2. 186, "Bid herself *assay him.*" The substantive *assay*, which is merely another spelling of *essay*, from Lat. *exagium*, a weighing, is now used only in the literal sense of the testing of metal or weights.

17. **o'er-raught,** passed; literally over-reached.

20. **as I think,** I believe: **they ... order,** they have already received orders.

23. **matter,** in this word, according to Delius, there is a tinge of contempt.

24. **doth much content me,** is a great satisfaction to me.

26. **give him ... edge**, it seems doubtful whether this means 'sharpen his inclination,' or 'push him towards,' in which sense we commonly use the verb to 'egg.' The next line seems to indicate the latter meaning.

29. **closely**, privately, secretly.

31. **Affront**, meet face to face, confront; the only sense of the word in Shakespeare, whereas its only meaning now is to 'insult,' from the idea of meeting with too bold a face.

32. **lawful espials**, who may justifiably act as spies in such a matter; used again in this concrete sense in i. *H. VI.* i. 4. 8, iv. 3. 6. Cp. "intelligence," *K. J.* iv. 2. 116; "speculations," *Lear*, iii. 1. 24.

33. **bestow ourselves**, station ourselves.

34. **encounter**, meeting, interview: **frankly**, freely; F. *franc*, free.

35. **And gather ... behaved**, and infer from his behaviour.

36. **affliction of his love**, the passionate love he feels.

37. **That thus ... for**, which causes him to suffer in this way.

38. **for your part**, as regards you.

39. **your good beauties**, the fascinations of your great beauty: **be the happy cause**, may happily prove to be the cause.

40-2. **so shall I ... honours**, for in that case I shall be able to cherish the hope that your various virtues will restore him to his usual healthy state of mind, with a result honourable alike to him and to you.

43. **Gracious**, addressed to the king; cp. "High and mighty," iv. 7. 43: **so please you**, provided it is agreeable to you.

44. **bestow ourselves**, place ourselves where we shall be unseen; cp. l. 33, above: **Read on**, fix your eyes on as though reading.

45, 6. **That show ... loneliness**, the appearance of your being occupied in that way will account for you being here all alone.

46-9. **We are .. himself**, we are often guilty,—as only too common experience shows,—of coating over our intentions, vile as the devil himself, with looks of sanctity and pious acts; for **sugar o'er**, cp. i. *H. IV.* i. 3. 251, "Why, what a *candy deal of courtesy* The fawning greyhound then did proffer me!" and below, iii. 1. 156, iii. 2. 65.

51. **beautified ... art**, which owes its beauty to rouge, etc., cp. *Cymb.* iii. 4. 51, 2, "Some jay of Italy Whose mother was her painting."

52. **Is not ... it**, is not more ugly in comparison with the thing to which it owes its beauty; cp. *Macb.* iii. 4. 64, "O, these flaws and starts Impostors *to* true fear."

53. **Than is ... word**, than are my actions in comparison with the specious language in which I dress them up; **most painted**, thickly plastered over with specious words; **deed** does not refer to the particular deed of murdering his brother, but to his base actions generally.

56. **To be ... question**, whether to continue to live or not, that is the doubt I have to solve.

57. **whether ... mind**, whether it shows a nobler mind.

58. **slings**, properly that which casts a stone, here the missile itself: **outrageous**, violent, cruel.

59. **a sea of troubles**, many pages have been written upon the incongruity of taking arms against a sea, but a **sea of troubles** is a common expression in other languages besides English for a host, immensity, of troubles, and the mixture of metaphors is not greater than in many passages of Shakespeare; not much greater, for instance, than the "*music* of his *honey* vows," l. 156 below.

61. **No more**, *i.e.* for death is nothing more than a sleep: **to say we end**, to assure ourselves that we thus put an end to, etc.

63, 4. **'tis a ... wish'd**, that is a conclusion for which we may well pray.

65. **there 's the rub**, there is the difficulty; if we could be quite sure that death was a dreamless sleep, we should not need to have any hesitation about encountering it; **rub**, obstacle; a metaphor from the game of bowls; cp. *K. J.* iii. iv. 128, "the breath of what I mean to speak Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little *rub* Out of the path": *H. V.* ii. 2. 188, "For every *rub* is smoothed on our way."

66-8. **For in .. pause**, for the doubt as to what dreams may come in that sleep of death, when we have put off this encumbrance of the body ("this muddy vesture of decay," *M. V.* v. 1. 64), must compel us to hesitate when considering the question of suicide; though **coil** is elsewhere used by Shakespeare as = turmoil, tumult, and may here include that meaning also, the words **shuffled off** seem to show that the primary idea was that of a garment impeding freedom of action.

68, 9. **there 's the respect ... life**, in that lies the consideration which makes misfortune so long-lived; if it were not for that consideration, we should quickly put an end to calamity by ending our lives.

70. **the whips ... time**, the blows and flouts to which one is exposed in this life; here **time** seems to be opposed to eternity, as in *Macb.* i. 7. 6, "If ... that but this blow Might be the be-all and the end-all here, But here upon this bank and shoal of *time*, We'ld jump *the world to come*"; and **the whips and scorns**

to be a general expression for the particulars in the next four lines, "the oppressor's wrong," "the law's delay," "the insolence of office," coming under the head of **whips**, and "the proud man's contumely," "the pangs of despised love," and "the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes," under that of **scorns**. It is, however, possible that **of time** may be equivalent to "of the times," as *e.g.* in *K. J.* v. 2. 12, "I am not glad that such a sore *of time* Should seek a plaster by contemn'd revolt."

73. **The insolence of office**, the insolent behaviour with which men in office treat those who have to sue to them: cp. the term "Jack in office," and i. *H. VI.* i. 1. 175, "But long I will not be *Jack out of office*."

74. **That patient .. takes**, that men of merit have patiently to endure at the hands of those who have no claim to respect. Furness remarks, "In the enumeration of these ills, is it not evident that Shakespeare is speaking in his own person? As Johnson says, these are not the evils that would particularly strike a *prince*."

75. **his quietus**, his release, acquittance; **quietus** was the technical term for acquittance of all debts at the audit of accounts in the Exchequer, and is used as late as Burke, *Speech on Economical Reform*. Cp. *Sonn.* cxxvi. 12, "Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be, And her *quietus* is to render thee."

76. **With a bare bodkin**, with a mere dagger. Though Shakespeare probably had in his mind the idea also of an *unsheathed* dagger, his primary idea seems to be the *easiness* with which the release could be obtained, and the word **bodkin**, a diminutive, = small dagger, goes to confirm this notion. Among other passages in which the word occurs, Steevens quotes Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Custom of the Country*, ii. 3. 87, "Out with your *bodkin*, Your pocket-dagger, your stiletto": **fardels**, burdens; "a diminutive of F. *farde*, a burden, still in use in the sense of 'bale of coffee'" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

77. **grunt**, groan; the word, though now having a ludicrous association, had none to the ears of our forefathers. Steevens gives several instances of its use, and Staunton one from Armin's *Nest of Ninnies*, which is particularly apt; "how the fat fooles of this age will *gronte and sweat* under their massie *burden*."

79. **bourn**, boundary, confines; cp. *Lear*, iv. 6. 57, "From the dread summit of this chalky *bourn*."

80. **No traveller returns**, to the cavil that this is in opposition to the fact of the ghost of the king having re-visited the earth, Coleridge conclusively replies, "If it be necessary to remove the apparent contradiction,—if it be not rather a great beauty,—

surely it were easy to say that no traveller returns to this world as to his home or abiding-place": **will**, resolution.

84, 5. **And thus .. thought**, and thus over the natural colour of determination there is thrown the pale and sickly tinge of anxious reflection.

86. **of great pitch and moment**, of soaring character and mighty impulse. The folios give *pith* for **pitch**, a word we have already had in i. 4. 22, in a different context. With Staunton, I take **pitch** in the sense of the highest point of a falcon's flight, as in *R. II.* i. 1. 109, "How high a *pitch* his resolution soars!" *J. C.* i. 1. 78, "Will make him fly an ordinary *pitch*"; but **moment** seems to me to be used here for 'momentum,' 'impulse,' the sense which the word appears to have in *A. C.* i. 2. 147, "I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer *moment.*"

87, 8. **With this .. action**, influenced by this consideration, divert their course, turn themselves from the path along which they were going, and no longer can be said to be active.

88. **Soft you now**! said to himself, 'but let me pause!'

89. **Nymph**, literally bride, was a title given to female deities of lower rank: **orisons**, prayers; through F. from Lat. *orare*, to pray.

90. **Be all ... remember'd**! may you remember to ask pardon for all my sins! to intercede for me.

91. **How does ... day?** how have you fared for these many days during which I have not seen you? for **many a day**, see Abb. § 87.

93. **remembrances**, tokens of love given to ensure being remembered.

94. **longed long**, long been most desirous.

97. **you know ... did**, you know well enough, if you choose to remember, that you did give them to me, trifles though they may now seem, not worth remembering.

99, 100. **their perfume ... again**, now that you no longer have kind words to give me, take back the remembrances which those words made so dear to me.

100, 1. **for to ... unkind**, for, to a mind of any nobility, gifts, however costly, lose all their value when their givers change from what they were when they bestowed them.

102. **There, my lord**, said as she offers to return his gifts.

103. **honest**, virtuous, modest.

107, 8 **That if ... beauty**, that if you be virtuous and fair, your virtue should not allow itself any intercourse with your beauty.

109, 10. **Could beauty ... honesty?** Ophelia, with a woman's

wit, inverts the terms of the proposition by asking whether beauty could associate with anything more profitably than with virtue.

111. **Ay, truly**, yes, assuredly it could, so far as the interests of virtue are concerned.

113, 4. **this was .. proof**, this was at one time considered a strange idea, but the present times have shown that it is a mere truism; **paradox**, literally that which is contrary to (received) opinion.

117, 8. **for virtue .. it**, for virtue cannot so graft herself upon human nature but it shall smack of its original depravity; **inoculate**, Lat. *in*, in, and *oculus*, an eye, the technical term for the bud which is grafted on to another tree. Cp. *W. T.* iv. 4. 92-5.

120. **I was the more deceived**, then my mistake was all the greater.

121. **why wouldst thou**, why should you desire.

122. **indifferent honest**, fairly honourable as men go; **indifferent**, used adverbially.

123. **it were better**, it would be better.

125. **at my beck**, ready to come at my summons, whenever I choose to beckon to them; **thoughts .. in**, thoughts in which to clothe them.

127, 8. **What should ... heaven?** what business have such wretched fellows as myself to be crawling, like noxious reptiles, on earth and aspiring to heaven? **arrant**, thorough, utter; "a variant of *errant*, wandering, vagrant, vagabond, which from its frequent use in such expressions as *arrant thief*, became an intensive, 'thorough, notorious, downright,' especially from its original associations, with opprobrious names" (Murray, *Eng. Dict.*). Though generally used in a bad sense, we find it occasionally in a good one, *e.g.* Ford, *The Fancies, Chaste and Noble*, iii. 2, "true and *arrant* ladies"; also Ford, *Love's Sacrifice*, ii. 2, and Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Loyal Subject*, iii. 5, and *The Little French Lawyer*, iv. 4. 4.

129. **thy ways**, see note on i. 3. 135.

132. **shut upon him**, shut against his going out.

136, 7. **be thou ... calumny**, see quotation from *W. T.* ii. 1. 71-4, on i. 1. 38, above.

138. **needs**, of necessity; the old genitive used adverbially.

139. **what monsters ... them**, an allusion to the old belief that horns grew out of the forehead of men whose wives had been unfaithful to them.

142. **your paintings**, the rouging of the complexion so common among your sex; **your**, used generally.

144. **jig,** are given to loose dances: **amble,** walk with a mincing gait.

144, 5. **nick-name God's creatures,** are not content with calling God's creatures by their right names, but must invent foolish and ribald ones for them: a *nick-name* is *an eke-name*, a name given to *eke* out another name, an additional name; **creatures,** both animate and inanimate, as in *K. J.* iv. 1. 121, "fire and iron... *creatures* of note for mercy-lacking uses." So, Bacon, *Essay of Truth*, "The first *creature* of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense"; also *Temp.* iii. 3. 74: **and make ... ignorance,** and when charged with immodest behaviour plead ingenuous simplicity as your excuse.

146. **I 'll no more on 't,** I will allow no more of such goings on; **on't,** of it, *sc.* your behaviour.

148. **one,** *sc.* the king. "This exception would be quite unintelligible to Ophelia, but the audience, who are in Hamlet's secret, see its purport" (Cl. Pr. Edd.): **keep as they are,** remain unmarried.

151. **The courtier's ... sword,** *i.e.* the eye of the courtier, the tongue of the scholar, the sword of the soldier; Hamlet, according to Ophelia, being endowed with the sprightly look of the courtier, the learning of the scholar, and the skill in arms of the soldier.

152. **The expectancy ... state,** the hope and chief ornament of the state, thus beautified by him; **fair** is used proleptically, which was made fair by wearing him (as a rose in a dress, coat, etc.).

153. **The glass of fashion,** in whom was reflected all that was in the highest fashion, the most perfect good taste; **the mould of form,** "the model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves" (Johnson).

154. **The observed of all observers,** he whose conduct and carriage was closely observed by every one as an example to be followed: **quite, quite down,** now utterly overthrown; cp. iii. 2. 198.

155. **deject,** dejected, broken-spirited; for the omission of the participial termination, see Abb. § 342.

156. **That sucked ... vows,** who so greedily drank in his honeyed words of love; Ophelia combines what is sweet to the taste and sweet to the ear.

157. **sovereign,** the supreme power in the state of man; cp. *J. C.* ii. 1. 68, "the state of man, Like to a little kingdom, suffers then The nature of an insurrection."

158. **Like sweet .. harsh,** like bells naturally of a sweet tone, rung in such a way as to be out of tune with each other, and so

harsh-sounding. It seems better to follow the folios in placing the comma after **tune** and not after **jangled**, as most editors follow Capell in doing.

159, 60. **That unmatch'd .. ecstasy**, that peerless form and feature of youth in its full bloom now cruelly marred by madness (as a flower in bloom is blasted by a storm); **feature** is used by Shakespeare for the person in general (and especially of dignified appearance, *e.g. R. II.* i. 1. 1?, *Cymb.* v. 5 163, as *featureless* in *Sonn.* xi. 10, for 'ugly'), and rarely, if ever, in the restricted modern sense of the particular parts of the face: so that **form and feature** is almost redundant: **woe is me**, woe is to me; see Abb. § 230.

161. **To have .. see**, that I should have known him as he once was, and should know him as he now is

162. **Love ! ... tend.** you say that love is the cause of his madness! nonsense! the bent of his mind is not in that direction.

163. **though it . little**, though it was somewhat incoherent, unmethodical.

164. **Was not**, for the emphatic double negative, see Abb. § 406.

165. **on brood**, a-brooding; cp. i. 5. 19.

166, 7. **And I do .. danger**, and I suspect that when the outcome of it is seen, we shall find it something dangerous; **disclose** "'is when the young just peeps through the shell.' It is also taken for laying, hatching, or bringing forth young; as 'She disclosed three birds.' R. Holme's *Academy of Armory and Blazon* ... Cp. also v. 1. 275 [273]" (Steevens).

167. **which for to prevent**, in order to anticipate which; **for to**, now a vulgarism, occurs, among the undoubted and wholly Shakespearian plays, in *W. T.* i. 2. 427, *A. W.* v. 3. 181, and below v. 1. 89.

168, 9. **I have ... down**, I have with prompt determination decided: **he shall**, *sc.* be sent, go; the verb of motion omitted, as frequently.

170. **For the ... tribute**, to demand the tribute of money due to us, which they have neglected to pay; cp. *Cymb.* iii. 1. 8-10.

171-5. **Haply ... himself**, possibly the variety of novel sights which in his voyage and travels he will behold will drive out this matter which has to some extent settled in his heart, and which by his brains constantly beating on it, has changed him from his usual self; the grammatical construction is 'the beating of his brains on which'; cp. *Cymb.* i. 6. 8, "blest be those .. that have their honest wills, which (*sc.* the having their wills) seasons comfort;" and see Abb. § 337.

176. **It shall do well**, the plan is certain to answer: **yet**, still (in time), not, notwithstanding what you say.

177, 8. **The origin ... love**, a redundancy for 'the origin and commencement are from,' etc., or 'his grief sprung from': **How now, Ophelia** ! what brings you here?

181. **if you ... fit**, if you agree with me as to the propriety of doing so.

183. **grief**, some editors prefer the reading of the folios, *griefs*, but we have the singular in l. 177, and the idea of a burden, which here seems wanted, is better expressed by the singular than the plural: **round**, peremptory, plain spoken; see note on ii. 2. 139.

184, 5. **in the ear ... conference**, where I can hear all that passes between them. Polonius insinuates that from maternal affection the Queen may not faithfully report the interview, and also perhaps that his wisdom is necessary to judge of the real meaning of what Hamlet may say with an accuracy that could not be expected of a woman: **find him**, discover his secret; cp. *Lear*, iv. 6. 104, "there I *found* 'em, there I smelt 'em out."

187. **Your wisdom**, you in your wisdom.

SCENE II.

1. Coleridge remarks, "This dialogue of Hamlet with the Players is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot."

2. **trippingly on the tongue**, with an easy delivery: **but if you**; before these words we must supply some such clause as 'and then all will go well': **mouth it**, deliver it in a bombastic manner.

3. **your players**, many players that you and I know well; see Abb. § 221: **had as lief**, should be as willing; **lief**, literally dear, beloved, pleasing; from A.S. *leóf*, *lióf*, dear: **the town-crier**, who shouts out proclamations, notices, etc., in the streets.

4. **saw the air**, move your arms up and down in emphatic gesture.

5. **use all gently**, in everything act with a quiet dignity.

5-7. **for in ... smoothness**, for even when your passion is at its highest pitch, you must learn to employ a restraint which shall make it go smoothly off.

8. **to the soul**, to the very depths of my nature.

8-11. **to hear ... noise**, to hear a big blustering bully in a wig utterly ruin the expression of strong emotion merely in order that the thunder of his tones may win the applause of the pit, fellows

for the most part incapable of appreciating anything but unintelligible dumb-shows and noise; **robustious**, used again in *H. V.* iii. 7. 159. Walker cites parallel old forms, *prolixious*, *stupendious*, *superbious*, and even *splendidious*: **periwig**, "The *i* after *r* is corruptly inserted; Minsheu gives the spellings *perwigge* and *perwicke*. Of these forms, *perwigge* is a weakened form of *perwicke*, or *perwick*; and *perwick* is an E. rendering of the O. Du. form [*peruyk*] as distinct from *peruke*, which is the F. form" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Steevens points out that in Shakespeare's time players most generally wore periwigs: **groundlings**, the frequenters of the pit, who stood on its floor, no benches being provided in that part of the theatre; the suffix *-lings* gives a contemptuous flavour to the word; **dumb-shows**, such as that which follows l. 120 of this scene.

12. **I would**, *i.e.* if I had my way: **o'erdoing**, exceeding in violence: **Termagant**, "was one of the idols .. the Saracens are supposed to worship ... The name is a corruption of O. F. *Tervagant*, *Tervagan*, or *Tarvagan* —Ital. *Trivigante*" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). This personage was frequently introduced into the old Moralities, and represented as of a violent character; the word is now used only of a boisterous, scolding woman.

13. **out-herods Herod**, outdoes Herod in fury; Herod in the old Mystery plays being always represented as violent, in reference to his slaughter of the innocents in the hopes of killing Christ, whose advent had been prophesied.

14. **I warrant your honour**, I promise you I will avoid all such extravagances; **your honour**, a title of respect.

15. **Be not ... neither**, at the same time take care to act with sufficient spirit; for **neither**, where we should say *either*, see Abb. § 128.

17. **with ... observance**, specially observing, taking note of, this.

18. **the modesty of nature**, the limits of natural moderation: such moderation as nature dictates: **from**, away from, and so opposed to; see Abb. § 158.

19. **end**, object, purpose; **at the first and now**, from the earliest times of the theatre to the present.

21. **feature**, shape, form; see note on iii. 1. 159: **scorn**, apparently objects of contempt; cp. *C. E.* iv. 4. 106.

22. **the very ... pressure**, give the period of time represented its exact form and image in every particular; **time** being regarded as something living is endowed with **age** and **body**; **pressure**, impression taken as it were in wax; cp. i 5. 100.

22, 3. **Now ... off**, now if you overdo this on the one hand, or fall short of it on the other: **unskilful**, *e.g.* the "groundlings"

24-6. **the censure ... others**, the opinion of one of whom (*sc.* good judges) you must admit would far outweigh a whole theatreful of ignorant persons; that **censure of the which one** = the opinion of one of which class (though it be a licentious expression) is, I think, clearly proved by **a whole theatre of** others.

27, 8. **not to .. profanely**, of whom I hope I may without profanity say. Cp. *M. V.* i. 2. 60, 1, "God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man."

28, 9. **that neither ... man**, who not being able to speak like Christians, and in the matter of carriage resembling neither Christian, pagan, or man at all.

30. **journeymen**, apprentices; from F. *journée*, a day, properly one who is hired by the day; cp. Burns, *Green grow the rushes, O*, "On man she tried her prentice han', And then she made the lasses, Oh!", said of Nature.

30, 1. **had made men**, had been making men; not all mankind, but these actors.

33. **indifferently**, pretty thoroughly.

34. **with us**, in our company.

35-7. **And let ... them**, do not let them follow the example of those actors who are always ready to insert something of their own into the speeches they have to deliver; to 'gag,' as it is now called in theatrical parlance,—a practice common in Shakespeare's day, and carried to great lengths. Stowe, quoted by Steevens, speaks of two men especially who were famed for their "*extemporall witt*," viz. Thomas Wilson and Richard Tarleton: **of them**, among them (*sc.* the players).

37, 8. **to set on . too**, to incite some of the mere barren-witted of their audience to join in the laugh.

38-40. **though ... considered**, though at the time some important point in the play has to be dealt with; **pitiful**, contemptible.

41. **uses it**, is guilty of the practice.

43. **and that presently**, not only hear it, but hear it at once.

48. **sweet lord**, a common form of address in Shakespeare's day: **at your service**, ready to attend your wishes.

49. **e'en as just a man**, as thoroughly upright a man.

50. **As e'er .. withal**, as ever I have met with in my intercourse with men; **conversation**, in the older and more literal sense of mixing with, associating with men; cp. *Cymb.* i. 4. 113, "With five times so much *conversation*, I should get ground of your fair mistress"; frequent in the Bible, *e.g.* *Psalms*, xxxvii. 14, ii. *Peter*, iii. 11; to *cope* is used both transitively and intransitively by Shakespeare, *e.g.* *M. V.* iv. 1. 412, "in lieu whereof, Three

thousand ducats ... We freely *cope* your courteous pains withal"; *W. T.* iv. 4. 435, "who of force must know The royal fool thou *copest with.*"

52. **advancement**, preferment.

53. **revenue**, with the accent on the second syllable.

54. **Why should ... flatter'd?** what good could there be in flattering?

55-7. **No, let ... fawning**, no, let the man of sugared words spend them upon foolish pomp (*i.e.* those who absurdly boast themselves of their grandeur), and bow their supple knees in those cases in which their adulation is likely to be rewarded by gain; for **pregnant**, cp. *T. C.* iv. 4. 90, "fair virtues all, To which the Grecians are most prompt and *pregnant*"; *Lear*, iv. 6. 227, "Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrow, Are *pregnant* to good pity"; for **thrift**, = gain, *W. T.* i. 2. 311, "To see alike mine honour as their profits, Their own particular *thrifts.*"

58-60. **Since my ... herself**, since my soul, so precious a possession, was capable of making choice, and could distinguish among men, her choice has been irrevocably fixed upon you; **distinguish**, in this sense, used by Shakespeare, with *betwixt*, except in ii. *H. VI.* ii. 1. 129, "Sight may *distinguish of* colours"; for **seal'd**, cp. *M. M.* v. 1. 245, "That's *seal'd* in approbation"; *Cymb.* iii. 6. 85, "had the virtue Which their own conscience *seal'd* them."

61. **As one, ... nothing**, like one who, though enduring every misfortune, seems unconscious that he is enduring any.

63. **with equal thanks**, with the same imperturbability.

64. **Whose blood ... commingled**, in whom passionate feeling and judgement are mingled in such due proportion.

65, 6. **That they ... please**, that fortune is not able to do what she will with them; the 'stops' in a wind instrument are the holes upon which the fingers are placed to regulate the passage of sound.

67. **passion's slave**, the slave of uncontrolled emotion.

68. **my heart's core**, the centre of my heart, or, as he goes on to say, the heart of his heart; **core** being nothing more than the Lat. *cor*, heart; most frequently used of the heart of fruits.

69. **Something too much of this**, Clarke remarks, "The genuine manliness of this little sentence, where Hamlet checks himself when conscious that he has been carried away by fervour of affectionate friendship into stronger protestation than mayhap becomes the truth and simplicity of sentiment between man and man, is precisely one of Shakespeare's touches of innate propriety in questions of feeling"...

70. **before the king**, *i.e.* to be acted before the king.

71, 2. **comes . death**, closely resembles in detail the manner of my father's death, of which I have already told you.

73. **that act**, that part of the drama: **afoot**, in process of being represented.

74. **Even with** .. "**soul**, with the most intense direction of every faculty" (Caldecott).

75. **occulted**, hidden; here only in Shakespeare.

76. **unkennel**, discover; literally to loose from the kennel.

77. **damned**, apparently used in a double sense, condemned to hell, and accursed in having deceived us.

79. **stithy**, forge; formerly used for both the forge and the anvil; here what we now call the 'smithy,' *i.e.* place where the smith works; **Give note**, mark him most carefully.

80. **rivet**, fix immoveably; for the figurative sense, cp. *Cymb.* ii. 2. 43, "Why should I write this down, that's *riveted*, Screw'd to my memory?"

81, 2. **And after** ... **seeming**, and when the play is over, we will compare our impressions as to his behaviour during it, and see what conclusions we come to.

83, 4. **If he steal** .. **theft**, if during the play any guilty look or movement of his escapes my notice, you may punish me as you like for having allowed myself to be duped by him; for **pay**, = pay for, the Cl. Pr. Edd. compare *R. J.* i. 1. 244, "I'll *pay* that doctrine, or else die in debt"; and for **theft**, = the thing stolen, *Exodus*, xxii. 4, "If the *theft* be certainly found in his hand alive," etc.

85. **I must be idle**, I must appear to be utterly unconcerned with the whole business, not seem in the least interested in watching how things go. Some editors understand **idle** to mean 'mad,' 'crazy': but the point is that while Horatio is free to give his whole attention to the king's behaviour, without being noticed, Hamlet for fear of being suspected of having planned the scheme, must appear to take no interest in the proceedings; and therefore in the next line he tells Horatio to secure a seat for himself where he may see clearly what effect the play produces, and to leave him to stroll about alone, lest being together they might seem to have some secret understanding between them.

87. **How fares** ... **Hamlet**? how are you, cousin?

88, 9. **Excellent**, ... **so**, Hamlet pretends to take the king's words to mean what fare (food) is set before you? and therefore answers, capital fare, from the chameleon's dish; I, like that animal, feeding upon air, for my diet is promises, which are not more substantial than air; you can feed animals like the chameleon and myself upon such food, but you will not find it

fattening for fowls; **Excellent**, the adjective for the adverb; the chameleon, literally the earth-lion, from feeding on insects so small as hardly to be visible, was popularly supposed to live upon air.

90, 1. **I have ... mine**, this answer has no connection with my question.

92. **No, nor mine now**, a reference, says Johnson, to the proverb, "A man's words are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken."

93. **university**, Shakespeare had in his mind the plays acted at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge by the under-graduates, and sometimes by professional actors.

96. **Julius Cæsar ... Capitol**, here, as in *Julius Cæsar*, Shakespeare mistakenly places the murder of Cæsar in the Capitol, though in reality it took place in or near Pompey's theatre.

98. **a brute part**, a brutal act on his part.

100. **stay ... patience**, are waiting till you shall give them permission to begin; for **patience**, in this sense, cp. *Temp.* iii. 3. 3, "*By your patience*, I needs must rest me"; *Oth.* i. 3. 89.

102. **here 's metal more attractive**, Ophelia being the magnet.

104. **in your lap**, at her feet, with his head resting against her lap, as he goes on to explain. Steevens says that to lie at the feet of a mistress, during any dramatic representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry.

110. **your only jig-maker**, only your composer of jigs; see note on ii. 2. 476, and for the transposition of **only**, Abb. § 420.

112. **within 's two hours**, within this period of two hours; less than two hours ago.

114, 5. **Nay then, ... sables**, Warburton reads *'fore, i.e.* before, a conjecture which Staunton thinks is possibly right, Hamlet, to emphasize his meaning, here flinging off his mourning cloak. Others take **sables** to mean a dress of much magnificence; while others again suppose the word should be *sabell, i.e.* of flame colour, or fawn-colour a good deal heightened with red. Possibly the meaning is, if my father has been remembered so long a time as two months, the devil may well wear his usual mourning, for I too will show my regard for his memory by wearing a dress of much the same colour as his, "my inky cloak," as he calls it, i. 2. 77. Still more possibly Hamlet did not intend himself to be understood; his words being purposely the "matter and indifferency mixed" of the distracted king in *Lear*, iv. 2. 178.

117. **by 'r lady**, see note on ii. 2. 402.

117, 8. **he must .. then**, if he wishes to keep his memory

green, he must leave behind him some visible remembrance of himself: **not thinking on**, oblivion; as though one word.

119. **the hobby-horse**, "a personage belonging to the ancient morris dance ... made .. by the figure of a horse fastened round the waist of a man, his own legs going through the body of the horse ... but concealed by a long foot-cloth; while false legs appeared where those of the man should be, at the side of the horse ... Latterly the hobby-horse was frequently omitted, which appears to have occasioned a popular ballad, in which was this line or burden, 'For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot'" (Nares).

STAGE DIRECTION. *Hautboys* from "O. F. *hault* . . high, and F. *bois* ... a bush. Thus the literal sense is 'high wood'; the *hautboy* being a wooden instrument of a high tone" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

122, 3. **makes ... him**, goes through the action of earnestly declaring her love for him.

123, 4. **takes .. neck**, raises her from her kneeling position, and lets his head fall upon her neck: **lays him down**, lies down.

126. **kisses it**, to show how precious it is in his sight, how dearly he would like to wear it.

128. **makes passionate action**, makes demonstration of deepest sorrow.

134. **miching mallecho**, secret mischief; to 'mich' was to lurk, and in i. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 450, we have *micher* for a truant; "Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a *micher* and eat blackberries?" for *mallecho* Dyce quotes Connelly's *Span. and Eng. Dict.*, "*Mallecho* An evil action, an indecent and indecorous behaviour; malefaction."

135 **Belike ... play**, probably this dumb-show indicates the plot of the play; **Belike**, *i.e.* by like, likelihood.

136. **We shall . . fellow**, we shall soon find out from this fellow.

137 **keep counsel**, keep a secret

144. **Here ... clemency**, which here humbly submits itself to you, hoping for merciful judgement.

146. **posy**, motto, frequently in verse, engraved upon a ring.

149. **Phœbus' cart**, the chariot of the sun-god.

150. **salt wash**, the sea; like **Phœbus' cart, orbed ground**, etc., intentional bombast.

154. **commutual**, mutually, each in each.

156. **done**, ended.

157. **you are ... late**, you have lately been so sick.

158. **So far .. state**, so different from your usual cheerful self.

159. **distrust you**, am anxious about you; so, "do not fear our person," iv. 5. 103, below.

160. **nothing**, in no way.

161, 2. **For women's ... extremity**, for women's fear and love are equally disproportionate to the object, being in either case much less or much greater than they should be; cp. *M. N. D.* i. 1. 232, "Things base and vile, *holding no quantity*, Love can transpose to form and dignity"; for instances of the inflection in *-s* with two singular nouns, see Abb. § 336.

163. **proof .. know**, you have learnt by experience.

165. **the littlest .. fear**, even the smallest doubt as to the well-being of the loved one becomes fear: **littlest**, here only in Shakespeare.

166. **Where little ... there**, where small fears exaggerate themselves into great ones, you may be sure that great love is present there; the figure in the latter clause is that of knowing a tree from its fruit.

168. **My operant .. do**, my active faculties cease to perform their functions; for the infinitive verb used as a noun, see Abb. § 355.

169. **live ... behind**, survive me.

171. **O, confound the rest!** shame on what you were about to add! *i.e.* pause before uttering such shameful words as are in your thought.

172. **Such .. breast**, such love if entering my heart would be treason.

173. **In second .. accurst**, if I marry a second husband, may I find him everything that is hateful.

174. **but who**, except those who.

175. **Wormwood, wormwood**, *i.e.* that stings him bitterly; as we say 'that's gall and wormwood to him'; **wormwood**, a very bitter plant still used in France in the manufacture of 'absinthe,' and 'vermuth.' The word has really nothing to do with either *worm* or *wood*, but is from the A.S. *wermód*, which, according to Skeat, is equivalent to 'mind-preserver,' from A.S. *werian*, to protect, and A.S. *mód*, mind, thus pointing back "to some primitive belief as to the curative properties of the plant in mental afflictions."

176. **instances**, inducements; the word is used by Shakespeare in a variety of meanings; motive, inducement, cause, symptom, information, proof, etc.

177. **base respects of thrift**, mean considerations of gain.

178, 9. **A second ... bed**, *i.e.* I will never allow a second husband

to kiss me, never wed a second husband; **kill ... dead**, a not uncommon redundancy, expressive of thoroughness.

182, 3. **Purpose .. validity**, determination easily yields itself captive to memory (*i.e.* passes away when that which gave it birth is forgotten), it being robust enough when first formed, but soon losing its strength.

184. **fruit**, plural.

185. **But fall ... be**, but which (*sc.* the fruits) fall, etc.; **fall** grammatically agrees with **fruit**, but logically refers to **purpose**; see Abb. § 415.

186, 7. **Most necessary . . debt**, it is only right and proper that we should be allowed to forget the payment of a debt which is due only to ourselves, *i.e.* omit, if we think fit, to carry out a resolution which concerns ourselves and nobody else.

188, 9. **What to ourselves . lose**, that which under the influence of strong feeling we propose to ourselves as a course of action, when that strong feeling passes away, loses its motive.

190, 1. **The violence .. destroy**, the violence of either grief or joy destroys those passions, and at the same time puts an end to the execution of their purposes; for the confusion of proximity due to the intervening **enactures**, cp. above i. 2. 37, 8, and see Abb. § 412.

192. **Where joy .. lament**, excessive indulgence in joy is followed by excessive abandonment to grief: laughter and tears are divided by the thinnest partition.

193. **Grief .. accident**, a very slight incident turns grief into joy, joy into grief.

194, 5. **This world ... change**, nothing, not even the world itself, is everlasting, and therefore it is not strange that even our love should change with change of fortune.

196, 7. **for 'tis .. love**, for it is a point still undetermined whether love or fortune proves itself the stronger influence when the two are opposed; **Whether**, metrically a monosyllable, as in ii. 2. 17; **lead**, subjunctive.

198. **The great .. flies**, the great man having fallen from his high estate, you see his former favourites at once quit his side; **favourites** is the reading of the first folio, the quartos and other folios giving *favourite*, a reading which, as Abbott says, completely misses "the intention to describe the *crowd* of favourites *scattering in flight* from the fallen patron"; for the inflection in -*s* with a plural subject, see Abb. § 333.

199. **The poor ... enemies**, the man of humble rank raised to a high position finds his former enemies quickly turn into friends; not 'makes friends *with* his enemies.'

200. **And hitherto ... tend**, and up to this time love has been found to wait on fortune, to accommodate itself to fortune.

201. **who not needs**, he who does not need; for the omission of the auxiliary verb, see Abb. § 305.

202. **hollow**, insincere; cp. *Lear*, iii. 156, "Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound Reverbs no *hollowness*."

203. **Directly ... enemy**, by that very act causes him to show in full flavour that ill will which had before been hidden.

204. **orderly ... begun**, to return in due order to the point from which I set out; **begun**, for *began*, for the sake of the rhyme.

205. **contrary**, in such opposite directions to each other; for instances of words in which the accent is nearer the end than with us, see Abb. § 490.

206. **still are overthrown**, are constantly being upset.

207. **none of our own**, not in the least in our power.

209. **die thy thoughts**, let such thoughts perish.

210. **Nor earth ... light!** may the earth fail to, etc.

211. **Sport ... night!** may the day shut me out of all enjoyment, the night fail to give me repose!

212. **To desperation ... hope!** may my expectations and hope turn, etc.

213. **An anchor's...scope!** may a hermit's fare be the utmost I can hope to enjoy! **anchor**, a shortened form of *anchoret*, or *anchorite*, ultimately from Gk. ἀναχωρητής, a recluse, one who has retired from the world, from Gk. ἀνά, back, and χωρεῖν, to retire.

214, 5. **Each opposite ... destroy!** may that which is most hostile to joy, and by its appearance causes joy's radiant face to turn pale with fear, encounter everything to which I wish success, and ruin it!

218. **If she ... now**, how terrible if after all her protestations she should now prove unfaithful to her first husband!

220. **My spirits grow dull**, weariness is creeping over me.

221. **rock**, as in a cradle.

224. **doth ... much**, is too full of protestations of love and loyalty.

225. **O, but ... word**, O, but you will see that she will, etc.; said ironically.

226. **argument**, plot; as in l. 135.

226, 7. **Is there ... in't?** does it not seem to you an objectionable one? "The king means a *moral* 'offence,' and Hamlet means a *physical* 'offence' or crime, as in i. 5. 137" (Delius).

231. **Tropically**, figuratively

232. **image**, exact representation.

234. **a knavish piece of work**, *sc.* the murder: **but what o' that?** but that matters nothing.

235. **free**, innocent of all crime.

235, 6. **let ... unwrung**, let those shrink who from their consciousness of guilt feel themselves galled by such a representation, we who are innocent need not complain; **withers**, the ridge between the shoulder blades of a horse on which the strain of the collar falls; **are unwrung**, escape being galled.

238. **chorus**, such as those in *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Romeo and Juliet*.

239, 40. **I could ... dallying**, if I could see you and your lover in amorous converse, I should be able to tell what was passing between you, just as I am able to explain who Lucianus is. Hamlet likens Ophelia and her lover (*i.e.* any one with whom she might be in love) to puppets. "An interpreter," says Steevens, "formerly sat on the stage at all *motions* or *puppet-shows*, and interpreted to the audience."

242. **So you must .. husbands**, that's how you must take your husbands, *sc.* for better, for worse; a reference to the ritual of the marriage ceremony in which the husband and wife each engage to take the other "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health," etc.

243. **leave ... faces**, have done with all the contortions of your face.

243, 4. **'the croaking .. revenge,'** Simpson says this is a satirical condensation of two lines of *The true Tragedie of Richard the Third*, "The screeking raven sits croking for revenge, Whole herds of beasts come bellowing for revenge."

246. **Confederate season**, "the opportunity conspiring to assist the murderer" (Cl. Pr. Edd.): **else ... seeing**, no one but myself being here to see what I do.

247. **rank**, noisome, foul: **of ... collected**, extracted from herbs gathered at midnight; cp. *Macb.* iv. 1. 25.

248. **with Hecate's ... infected**, blasted by a triple curse of Hecate's, and so trebly poisonous; **Hecate's**, a dissyllable, as always in Shakespeare.

249, 50. **Thy natural ... immediately**, appears to be generally taken to mean 'let your natural magic, etc., usurp on,' etc. But it seems doubtful whether **usurp** does not govern **natural magic and dire property** in the sense of exercise your innate magic and baneful qualities with wrongful force on healthy life.

251. **for's estate**, in order to get possession of his kingly

dignity; cp. *Mach.* i. 4. 37, "We will establish our *estate* upon Our eldest, Malcolm."

252. **writ,** for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 343.

256. **What, ... fire?** what, alarmed by a mere fiction!

261, 2. **Why, let ... play,** *i.e.* some must suffer while others meet with no harm; and so almost an equivalent to the next line.

263. **watch,** keep awake; see above, ii. 2. 148.

264. **So runs ... away,** such is the course of the world. Evidently a snatch from some old ballad, chanted by Hamlet not necessarily as applying to what has happened, but in exultation at the success of his scheme.

265. **a forest of feathers,** *i.e.* with appropriate costume. Malone says it appears from Decker's *Gul's Hornbooke* that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakespeare's time.

265, 6. **If the rest ... me,** if I fail in every other way to get my livelihood: **turn Turk,** a proverbial phrase for any change of condition for the worse, used specially of changing one's religion; cp. *M. A.* iii. 4. 57, "Well, an you be not *turned Turk,* there's no more sailing by the star": **Provincial roses,** rosettes as large as the roses of Provence, at the mouth of the Rhone, in France.

267. **razed shoes,** slashed shoes, shoes with ornamental cuts in the fore part, a fashion revived of late in the case of ladies' shoes: **get me ... players,** procure me a partnership in a company of actors; **cry,** more usually of a pack of hounds, from their giving tongue, hence a troop generally.

268. **a share,** "the actors in Shakespeare's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares of which the proprietors of the theatre ... had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit" (Malone).

269. **A whole one, I,** I should expect a whole one.

270. **O Damon dear,** my dearest friend; an allusion to the friendship of Damon and Phintias, which was proverbial for its sincerity, the former having offered to suffer death in place of the latter.

271. **dismantled,** robbed; properly used of stripping a house of its hangings, etc.

273. **pajock,** peacock; Dyce observes "I have often heard the lower classes in the north of Scotland call the peacock—the 'pea-jock,' and their almost invariable name for the turkey-cock is 'bubbly-jock'; and a writer in the *Ed. Rev.* for Oct. 1872 says that in the natural history of Shakespeare's time the bird was the accredited representative of inordinate pride and envy, as well

as of unnatural cruelty and lust, and that the word here expresses in a concentrated form the odious qualities of the guilty king."

274. **You ... rhymed**, *sc.* by substituting "ass" for **pajock**.

275, 6. **I'll take .. pound**, I'll accept the mere word of the ghost if it promises me so large a sum as a thousand pounds, *i.e.* I am perfectly certain now that the ghost's story was a true one; **pound**, for the concrete sum, as frequently in Shakespeare.

278. **Upon .. poisoning**, *i.e.* the king's behaviour as soon as the poisoning was mentioned.

280. **recorders**, Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, says, "Recorders and (English) Flutes are to outward appearance the same .. The number of holes for the fingers is the same, and the scale, the compass, and the manner of playing, the same," etc.

282. **perdy**, F. *par dieu*, by God; probably another quotation in which Hamlet alters the latter part of the second verse.

285. **a whole history**, not merely a word, but a whole history, if you wish it.

288. **Is in .. distempered**, has become, since he retired from witnessing the play, terribly distracted; see note on ii. 2. 55.

289. **With drink**, cp. *Oth.* i. 1. 99, "Being full of supper and *distempering* draughts"; the word *distemper* is in this sense a euphemism, but Graccho, in Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, i. 1. 18, considers the term too harsh to be applied to so exalted a person as the duke, "And the Duke himself, I dare not say *distemper'd*, But *kind*, and in his tottering chair carousing."

290. **choler**, wrath; literally *bile*, in which sense Hamlet pretends to take the word.

291, 2. **Your wisdom ... doctor**, you would act more wisely to report this to his doctor.

292, 3. **for me ... choler**, if I were to administer his purge (purges being given for bilious disorders), I should only increase his choler; of course Hamlet's purgative would be a moral one, that of calling upon him to repent his crime.

294, 5. **put your .. affair**, be pleased to answer me in some coherent form; some orderly shape.

296. **tame**, ready to hear anything you have to say; used with reference to Guildenstern's **wildly**.

300, 1. **Nay, ... breed**, nay, my good lord, the courtesy shown in the word 'welcome' is not of the kind proper to the occasion: **wholesome**, proper, reasonable.

302. **I will ... commandment**, I will give you the message sent by your mother.

302, 3. **If not .. business**, if not, I will finish my business by asking your permission to leave you, and returning to my mistress; for **pardon**, cp. above, 1. 2. 56.

306. **Make you ... answer**, give you a healthy answer; Hamlet pretends to take Guildenstern's **wholesome** in a literal sense, and gives as his reason for not being able to return such an answer that his intellect is unsound.

307. **you shall command**, shall be at your service; shall be rendered to you.

308, 9. **therefore .. matter**, therefore without further preface let us come to the business.

311. **admiration**, wonder.

312. **O wonderful .. mother!** what a wonderful son I must be if I can cause wonder in my mother.

313, 4. **But .. admiration?** but is this all you have to tell me? is there nothing else to follow after this expression of her wonder? **Impart**, do not keep to yourself anything you have to tell.

317. **We shall ... mother**, further to bewilder Guildenstern. Hamlet in **we** affects the royal style, and speaks as though obedience to a mother was about the last thing that could be expected of a son, instead of its being an ordinary duty.

318. **trade**, business; another intentional affectation.

320. **So I do .. stealers**, so I do still, I swear by these hands; said with grim irony; **pickers and stealers**, a reference to the Church Catechism, one of the promises made in it by the catechumen being to keep his "hands from picking and stealing."

321. **distemper**, see note on l. 288, above.

321, 3. **you do .. friend**, by refusing to communicate your griefs to your friend, you do but decline to avail yourself of the means of escaping from them; cp. Bacon, *Essay of Friendship*, "A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart ... You may take Sarza to open the liver; steel to open the spleen ... But no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart, to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession."

324. **advancement**, though Hamlet is not here speaking of his promotion to the crown, yet when Guildenstern takes him to be doing so, he keeps up the delusion.

325. **voice**, recommendation; cp. i. 2. 109.

326. **for**, in favour of, in behalf of.

327. **While .. grows,** Malone gives the remainder of the proverb from Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra,* 1598, "oft sterves the silly steede," and adds, "Hamlet means that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death."

328. **musty,** stale.

329. **recorders,** see note on l. 280, above; **To withdraw with you,** to step aside with you for a moment where we can be alone; a parenthetic expression explanatory of his movement.

330, 1. **why do you . . toil?** why do you endeavour to entrap me into some indiscreet avowal? A figure from stalking game, the object with the hunter being to get the animal to run with the wind so that it may not scent him or the snare set for it. Cp. *T. N.* iii. 4. 81, "Still you keep o' *the windy side* of the law."

332, 3. **if my duty... unmannerly,** if in the execution of my duty I seem to go further than I ought, it is my love to you that makes me seem so rude; or, perhaps, when the duty laid upon me is one that needs more audacity than I can boast, the love which bids me discharge it makes me clumsy in my eagerness.

334. **I do not .. that,** probably Hamlet, taking advantage of Guildenstern's enigmatical sentence, means that he is not so sure that he is speaking the truth.

340. **I know .. it,** I am quite ignorant how to handle the instrument so as to produce any harmony out of it; **touch,** used in a technical sense, as in *R. II.* i. 3. 165, "Or, like a cunning instrument .. put into his hands That knows no *touch* to tune the harmony."

341. **'Tis as easy as lying,** with the innuendo that Guildenstern found no difficulty in that act.

341, 2. **govern .. thumb,** apply your fingers and thumb to the stops to regulate the emission of sound.

343. **discourse,** utter, give expression to.

345, 6. **But these ... harmony,** but these stops I cannot so regulate as to make them give forth any harmonious sound; **the skill,** the necessary knowledge.

347, 8. **how unworthy ... me!** how mean an opinion you must have of me!

348, 9. **you would ... stops,** you assume, as it seems to me, to know how to extract utterance from me at your will.

350, 1. **you would ... compass,** you fancy you can interpret my every thought; a play upon the word **sound** in the sense (1) to bring forth a sound, (2) to try the depth of water, cp. i. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 6; **compass,** the range of a musical instrument from its highest to its lowest note.

354. **fret me**, annoy me; with a play upon the substantive 'frets,' *i.e.* stops of such instruments as lutes, guitars; "small lengths of wire [across the neck of the instrument] on which the fingers press the strings in playing the guitar" (Busby's *Dict. of Musical Terms*, quoted by Dyce).

357, 8. **and presently**, and that too at once.

361. **mass**, see note on ii. 1. 50; **and**, as you say; for **and**, in this confirmatory sense, see Abb. § 97.

363. **backed like a weasel**, shaped like the back of a weasel.

366. **Then ... by**, an intentionally inconsequent answer: **by and by**, at once.

367. **They fool ... bent**, they are ready to assent to anything I say, however foolish, in order to gain their purpose; for **bent**, see note on ii. 2. 30.

369. **By and by ... said**, that's not a very difficult undertaking.

371. **the very .. night**, the very time of night when witchery abounds, when as Macbeth says (*Macb.* ii. 1. 51, 2) "witchcraft celebrates Pale Hecate's offerings."

372. **yawn**, open wide, to allow the dead to walk.

373. **Contagion**, infectious vapours.

374. **such bitter business**, such deeds of bitter cruelty.

375. **Soft**! let me pause!

376. **lose not thy nature**, do not forget your natural affection for your mother.

377. **Nero**, who murdered his mother in the most brutal manner; cp. *K. J.* v. 2. 102, "Your bloody *Neroes*, ripping up the womb Of your dear mother, England": **this firm bosom**, this bosom of mine, fully determined though it is to punish the guilty.

379. **speak daggers**, *i.e.* words that will stab to the heart as keenly as daggers would pierce the flesh; cp. *M. A.* ii. 1. 255, "She *speaks poniards*, and every word stabs," though there used in no very serious sense.

380. **My tongue ... hypocrites**, in this matter let my soul be a hypocrite to my tongue, *i.e.* though appearing to approve of my words not assent to my carrying them into action.

381, 2. **How in ... consent**! however roughly I may take her to task, let me never yield to the impulse to ratify my words by deeds, *i.e.* the deed of murder; **seals**, because the affixing of the seal was necessary to give validity to a document; **shent**, from *shend*, to reprove, castigate with words. A good deal of indignation has been expressed at Hamlet's being made to contemplate even the possibility of punishing his mother by death. But, though

determined that the king shall not escape his vengeance, and here indirectly dwelling upon that determination, Hamlet seems to be referring to the ghost's words in i. 5. 84-8, which even now that he feels sure of his mother's having been privy to the deed, at all events after it was done, he will implicitly obey, however violent his wrath against her. If the thought of such a possibility as killing his mother enters his head, it is the ghost's caution that has put it there.

SCENE III.

1, 2. **I like . range**, I do not like the look of things as regards him, nor is it safe for us to allow his madness to have free scope; **his madness**, him who is mad; **you**, reflexive.

3. **I your commission ... dispatch**, I will at once make out the commission which you are to take to England. It does not seem to follow at all necessarily that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are privy to the traitorous scheme for *killing* Hamlet in England. That he was to be got out of the way, they of course knew; but the king would hardly be likely to confide to his agents what was to be done with him when thus out of the way.

4. **shall along**, for the omission of the verb of motion, see Abb. § 30.

5-7. **The terms ... lunacies**, the terms on which we hold sway are not of so secure a nature that we can afford to look with unconcern upon the dangers which every moment spring from his mad freaks, and threaten us so nearly: **ourselves provide**, supply ourselves with everything necessary for the voyage.

8-10. **Most holy ... majesty**, the anxiety you feel for the safety of those who are dependent upon you is a most holy feeling, their welfare being a sacred duty to one in your position.

11-3. **The single ... noyance**, even the individual man (who has no one to think of but himself) is in prudence bound to use every faculty of his mind to keep himself from injury; **noyance**, *i.e.* annoyance, used for injury, danger, as in *R. II.* iii. 2. 16, *Macb.* v. 1. 84, and the verb *annoy* in *Cymb.* iv. 3. 34, *H. V.* ii. 2. 103.

14. **spirit**, here little more than **life**, in l. 11; the vital principle.

15, 6. **The cease ... alone**, the extinction of majesty in the death of a king is much more than the single death of an ordinary man.

16, 7. **but, like ... it**, involves the sweeping away of everything connected with it (*sc.* majesty), as a whirlpool engulfs everything that comes within its area.

18. **highest mount,** *i.e.* from which the fall will be most headlong.

20. **mortised,** firmly fixed; a *mortise* is the groove made in timber into which the tenon of another piece of timber is fixed; for the substantive, cp. *Oth.* ii. 1. 9, "What ribs of oak ... Can hold the *mortise?*"

20-2. **which, ... ruin,** and when this massive wheel is precipitated down, everything however small, that is an adjunct of it, everything however trifling that accompanies it, is swept away in its violent overthrow.

23. **but with ... groan,** without that sigh being echoed by the groan of the whole kingdom; **alone,** l. 22, is somewhat redundant.

24. **Arm you,** prepare yourselves.

25, 6. **For we ... free-footed,** for I will put restraint upon this danger which now ranges abroad too freely; for **fear,** = object of fear, ii. *H. IV.* iv. 5. 196, "all these bold *fears* Thou see'st with peril I have answered."

28. **Behind ... myself,** I will betake myself to a place behind the tapestry; that space between it and the wall being sometimes very considerable; for **arras,** see note on ii. 2. 163.

29. **To hear the process,** to hear how the interview proceeds; **tax,** a doublet of *task*; **home,** used adverbially.

30. **as you said,** "this was Polonius's own suggestion, which, courtier-like, he ascribes to the king" (Moberly).

32. **of vantage,** "from the vantage-ground of concealment" (Abb. § 165).

36-8. **O, my offence .. murder,** O, my crime, the murder of a brother, is so foul that the taint of it has reached the very heavens, and on it rests the curse pronounced upon Cain.

39. **Though ... will,** though my inclination and my will to do so equally spur me on; **inclination,** the natural disposition to do a thing; **will,** the determination prompted by the understanding.

40. **My stronger ... intent,** strong as my purpose is, my guilt is stronger still, and overcomes it.

41. **to double ... bound,** whose attention is engaged upon two matters of business which have nothing in common with each other.

42. **in pause,** hesitating.

43. **What if,** even supposing that.

45. **sweet,** used here in the twofold sense of kind, gracious, and of purifying by means of rain; for the former sense, cp.

Lear, i. 5. 50. "*sweet* heaven"; iii. 4. 91, "in the *sweet* face of heaven"; *Oth.* ii. 1. 197.

46, 7. **Whereto ... offence,** of what avail is mercy except to overawe the face of crime so that it shrinks abashed out of sight?

48-50. **And what's .. down?** and what efficacy has prayer except the twofold one of arresting our fall, or of procuring pardon when we have fallen? The original sense of **forestall** is, says Skeat, "to buy up goods before they had been displayed at a *stall* in the market"; so to anticipate, and then to prevent; cp. v. 2. 203.

50. **Then I'll look up,** *i.e.* with hopeful eyes; take courage; cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 113, "My sovereign lord, cheer up yourself, *look up.*"

52. **serve my turn?** be of service in my case? a phrase very frequent in Shakespeare, **turn** being equivalent to occasion exigence.

54. **effects,** the advantages which he specifies in the next line.

55. **ambition.** Delius explains this as the realization of ambition. It does not seem certain to me that the word, instead of being one of three "effects," is not in apposition with **My crown,** *i.e.* my crown which was the very object of my ambition.

56. **May one .. offence,** is it possible for one to be pardoned while still retaining that for which he sinned? **offence,** abstract for concrete.

57. **In the ... world,** in the tainted streams of this world, *i.e.* in the corrupted ways in which this world goes. Dyce and Furness adopt Walker's conjecture *currents*, *i.e.* occurrents; but it seems that there is a reference to a polluted stream, and the confusion of metaphors is not greater than others we have had.

58. **offence's ... justice,** the wealthy offender is able to thrust justice aside.

59, 60. **the wicked . law,** a favourable verdict is secured by the very wealth which has been wrongfully acquired.

61, 2. **There ... nature,** before God's tribunal there is no evading justice, there the deed is seen in its real enormity. The Cl. Pr. Edd. say that Shakespeare here uses **lies** in its legal sense; but though there is probably a play upon the word in that sense, it can scarcely be the only or even primary one.

62-4. **and we ... evidence,** and we cannot escape being brought face to face with our own sins to give evidence against them; for **to the teeth,** cp. below, iv. 7. 57, and *H. VIII.* i. 2. 36, "Daring the event *to the teeth*"; the auxiliary verb 'are' before **compelled** is to be supplied from **lies** in l. 61.

65. **Try**, let me try.

66. **Yet what ... repent?** yet of what avail is repentance when it consists in sorrow only without amendment of life?

68, 9. **O limed soul ... engaged!** O soul entangled in difficulties, and only more thoroughly entangled by your efforts to free yourself. The metaphor is from snaring a bird by means of bird-lime, a glutinous substance which boys smear over a stick placed across the nest, and by which the bird when alighting is held fast, its struggles to get free only causing it to smear itself with more of the bird-lime.

69. **Make assay!** make vigorous effort to rescue me!

70. **heart ... steel**, naturally so unyielding.

73. **Now ... pat**, I could not find a time more fit for my purpose; cp. *H. VIII.* ii. 3. 84, "Come *pat* betwixt too early and too late"; "this can hardly be other than the same word as *pat*, a tap ... But the *sense* is clearly due to an extraordinary confusion with Du. *pas*, pat, convenient, in time, which is used in exactly the same way as E. *pat*" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

74. **And so**, and the consequence will be that, etc.

75. **That would be scann'd**, that point requires careful scrutinizing.

76. **for that**, in return for that.

79. **O, this .. salary**, such a deed as that would be something for which I might well ask payment, *i.e.* I should be doing him the greatest possible kindness, not punishing him, as I ought.

80. **He took ... bread**, he took my father by surprise when in a state of gross and luxurious living. Malone points out that **full of bread** is borrowed from *Ezekiel*, vi. 49, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, *fulness of bread*, and abundance of idleness."

81. **With all ... May**, with all his sins in full blossom, and with his blood flowing in his veins with the lusty vigour of the sap of trees in mid-spring; cp. below, iii. 4. 69.

82. **And how ... heaven**, and how his account in the next world stands none knows but God.

83, 4. **But in our .. him**, but so far as we can judge by looking at the matter from all points of view, things are in an evil plight with him; **our circumstance and course of thought**, is equivalent to the circumstantial course of our thought, the course of our thought which goes round and round the subject and views it in all its particulars.

85. **To take ... soul**, in seizing the opportunity of killing him when he is purging his soul of guilt.

86. **passage**, *sc.* from this world to the next.

88. **Up, sword,** return to your sheath; suiting the action to the word: **and know** ... **hent,** and wait to seize a more terrible opportunity; **hent,** is variously explained as grasp, opportunity, grip; it is the participle of O. E. *henten*, A.S. *hentan*, to snatch, seize.

89. **drunk asleep,** in a drunken sleep.

91. **At gaming,** engaged in gaming: **about,** occupied with.

92. **That has** . .**in 't,** that, unlike his present occupation, has nothing in it that savours of the salvation of his soul.

93. **Then trip** ... **heaven,** then give him such a fall that he will go headlong to hell.

95. **stays,** is waiting for me.

96. **This physic** ... **days,** "Hamlet calls his temporary forbearance a physic which does not impart life to his foe, but prolongs his illness" (Delius).

98. **Words** ... **go,** mere words of prayer, into which heartfelt penitence does not enter, never reach the throne of God.

SCENE IV.

1. **straight,** straightway, immediately: **Look** ... **him,** be sure you drive your blows home *i.e.* press him with your questions so that he cannot escape answering definitely.

2. **pranks,** freaks of madness: **have been** ... **with,** have gone to too great a length to be endured any longer.

3, 4. **hath screen'd** ... **him,** have interposed to shield him from much wrath which would otherwise have fallen upon him.

4. **sconce me,** hide myself; from O. F. *esconser*, to hide, cover; cp. *M. W.* iii. 3. 96, "I will *ensconce me* behind the arras."

5. **be round with him,** use the plainest language possible to him; for **round,** see note on ii. 2. 139.

6. **I'll warrant you,** I promise you that I will.

7. **Fear me not,** do not doubt my pressing him hard.

11. **you answer** ... **tongue,** your answer is mere frivolity.

14. **rood,** cross, *i.e.* of Christ; "it would appear that, at least in earlier times, the *rood* signified not merely the cross, but the image of Christ upon the cross" (Dyce).

16. **would** ... **so**! alas!

17. **Nay, then,** ... **speak,** if you are going to answer me in such a strain as this, I will set those to talk to you who will force you to use very different language.

18. **budge,** stir, move a step.

19, 20. **You go not ... you**, you will not be allowed to move from this spot till, as in a mirror, I have shown you your real nature.

23. **a rat**, Collier points out that in Shirley's *Traitor*, 1635, Depazzi says of a secreted listener, "I smell *a rat* behind the hangings": **Dead, for a ducat**, I 'll wager a ducat I have killed him.

STAGE DIRECTION. *A pass*, a thrust with his rapier.

32. **thy better**, *i.e.* in rank, *sc.* the king: **take thy fortune**, take the fate which has befallen you owing to your thrusting yourself in where you were not wanted.

33. **is some danger**, is a dangerous kind of business.

34. **Leave ... hands**, it is no good your making all this outward show of grief.

35, 6. **And let me ... stuff**, it is your heart that should be wrung, and that I mean to do, if it is not impenetrably callous.

37, 8. **If damned ... sense**, if accursed familiarity with crime has not so brazened it as to be proof against all feeling.

39. **wag thy tongue**, use your tongue so freely; cp. the literal use of the word in *M. V.* iv. 1. 76, "You may as well forbid the mountain pines To *wag* their high tops and to make no noise," *i.e.* without making any noise.

40, 1. **Such an act ... modesty**, you have committed a deed of a nature that dims the grace of all modest blushes; the modesty of all your sex is robbed of much of its grace by the fact of a woman having done such a deed.

42. **calls virtue hypocrite**, makes all real virtue seem mere hypocrisy; cp. *Cymb.* iii. 4. 63-6, *H. V.* ii. 2, 138-40.

42-4. **takes off ... there**, and in place of the tenderness that graces an innocent love, sets upon its brow a shameless flush.

46, 7. **As from the body ... soul**, as robs the outward form of the marriage tie of that which is its essential grace; **contraction**, for marriage contract, is not found elsewhere.

48. **A rhapsody of words**, a mere extravagant utterance of words without meaning; **rhapsody**, Gk. ῥαψῳδία, the reciting of epic poetry, from ῥαψῳδός, one who strings odes or songs together.

49-51. **Yea, ... act**, yea, even this solid earth, with gloom-struck face, as though expectant of the day of judgement, is sick at heart in beholding such a deed. Wordsworth refers, among other passages in the New Testament, to ii. *Peter*, iii. 7-11, *Revelations*, xx. 11. For **doom**, cp. *Macb.* ii. 3. 83, "up, up, and see The great *doom's* image!"

51, 2. **what act, ... index?** what act of mine is it that has so stormy a prelude? Dyce gives "*Index*, a prelude, anything preparatory to another,—the *index* (*i.e.* table of contents) being generally in Shakespeare's day prefixed to the book."

53. **this picture ... this,** there is much discussion here as to whether any pictures are really shown, if so, whether they are pictures hanging on the wall, or miniatures produced for the occasion, one, of his father, possibly hanging round Hamlet's neck, the other, of the king, round that of the queen.

54. **counterfeit presentment,** exact resemblance; **counterfeit,** here an adjective, is frequently used by Shakespeare, as a substantive, for a portrait, *e.g.* *M. V.* iii. 2. 115, "Fair Portia's *counterfeit!*"

56. **Hyperion's curls,** see note on i. 2. 140; on some ancient coins the sun-god is represented with an abundance of curls in imitation of the lambent rays on the circumference of the sun's disc: **front,** brow.

57. **to threaten,** expressive of threatening; awe-striking.

58. **station,** posture: **herald,** Mercury being the messenger of the gods.

59. **heaven-kissing,** reaching almost to heaven.

60. **combination,** *sc.* of excellences.

61, 2. **Where every ... seal,** which bore the impression of the hand of all the gods, set there in attestation of his nobility.

64, 5. **like ... brother,** infecting and so destroying his brother as a mildewed ear of corn by its neighbourhood to a healthy ear infects and blights it; "*mildew,* from A.S. *meledeaw,* honey-dew ... The sense is probably 'honey-dew,' from the sticky, honey-like appearance of some kinds of blight, as, *e.g.* on lime-trees" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

66. **leave to feed,** cease to draw your nourishment from; desert his support.

67. **batten,** grow fat; properly intransitive, as here, but used transitively by Milton, *Lycidas,* 29, "*battening* our flocks."

68. **You ... love,** you cannot say that you were led astray by ardent love.

69. **The hey-day ... humble,** passion no longer overleaps its bounds, but has become dulled and well under control; **hey-day,** properly an interjection of surprise or exultation.

70. **waits upon,** waits for the direction of.

71. **step,** transfer itself, pass; with the idea of passing from what is good to what is bad: **sure,** certainly.

72. **motion,** "impulse of desire" (Staunton), who compares *M. M.* i. 4. 59, "The wanton stings and *motions* of the sense";

Oth. i. 3. 95, "Of spirit so still and quiet, that her *motion* Blush'd at herself;" i. 3. 334, "our raging *motions*, our carnal stings."

73. **apoplex'd**, suddenly deprived of its functions; as the body is by a stroke of apoplexy; from Gk. ἀποπλήσσειν, to cripple by a stroke.

73-6. **for madness ... difference**, for even madness would never make such a mistake, nor sense ever allow itself to become so entirely the slave of passionate feeling as to leave itself no power of choice by which to help itself in deciding between two objects so different from each other (and one so inferior to the other).

77. **cozen'd**, cheated; from "F. *cousiner*, 'to claime kindred for advantage, or particular ends; as he, who to save charges in travelling, goes from house to house, as *cosin* to the honour of every one'; Cotgrave. So in modern F. *cousiner* is 'to call cousin, to sponge, to live upon other people'; Hamilton and Legros. The change of meaning from 'sponge' to 'beguile' or 'cheat' was easy" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **hoodman blind**, what we now call 'blind-man's-buff,' a game among children in which one of them has his eyes 'hooded,' or blinded, with a handkerchief, and is set to catch and name one of his companions, a forfeit being paid if he names the wrong one.

78-81. **Eyes ... mope**, eyes without the help of touch to guide them, touch without the help of sight, etc., or even a small portion, and that a diseased portion, of a single healthy sense, would not show itself so dull and stupid; **mope**, "the same word as *mop*, to grimace ...—Du. *moppen*, to pout; whence to grimace, or to sulk".. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

82-5. **Rebellious ... fire**, if hellish passion can burst out into such uncontrolled mutiny in a woman of her age, virtue in the case of ardent youth may well show itself as soft as wax and melt in the fire which she (in **flaming youth**) feels; **mutine**, the older form of 'mutiny,' as the substantive in v. 2. 6, and *K. J.* ii. i. 378. Hanmer plausibly conjectures *heat* for **hell**.

85-8. **proclaim ... will**, virtue (in the case of young men) need not protest any indignation when the strength of passion gives the signal for action, since here we have proof that aged blood, which should be cold as ice, burns as fiercely as that which runs in the veins of youth, and that reason which should restrain impulse only acts as a go-between to it and its object; for **gives the charge**, cp. *Lucr.* 434, "Anon his beating heart, alarum striking, *Gives the hot charge* and bids them do their liking."

89. **into ... soul**, so that I am forced to look into the very depths of my soul.

90. **grained**, dyed so deeply and permanently; "*granum*, in Latin, signifies a seed or kernel, and it was early applied to all

small objects resembling seeds, and finally to all minute particles. Hence it was applied to the round, seed-like form of the dried body, or rather ovarium, of an insect of the genus *coccus*, which furnished a variety of red dyes ... The colour obtained from kermes or grain was peculiarly durable .. See *C. E.* iii. 2. 108, '*Ant. S.* That 's a fault that water will mend. *Dro. S.* No, sir, 'tis *in grain*; Noah's flood could not do it'; *T. N.* i. 5. 256, "'Tis *in grain*, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.'" ... (Marsh, *Lectures on the Eng. Lang.*).

91. **As will ... tinct**, that nothing can wash them out; **leave**, "part with, give up, resign. Cp. *T. G.* iv. 4. 79, 'It seems you loved not her to *leave* her token'" (Steevens).

94. **that is ... tithe**, literally who is not the twentieth part of the tenth part, *i.e.* who weighs nothing as against, etc.

95. **a vice of kings**, who is, to a real king nothing more than the buffoon in the old Moralities was to the serious characters. Douce shows that the 'Vice' in those old plays was so named from the vicious qualities attributed to him, and from the mischievous nature of his general conduct.

96. **A cutpurse ... rule**, one who has filched the empire and its sway as a common pick-pocket filches his stolen goods. Purses were in Shakespeare's day worn hanging at the girdle, and so were easily cut off by thieves.

99. **A king ... patches**, a king with nothing kingly about him, made up of nothing but the cast-off remnants of kingly dignity. Cp. Antony's contemptuous description of Lepidus, *J. C.* iv. 2. 36-9.

101. **What would . figure**? what would you desire appearing thus?

103. **Do you ... chide**, you surely must have come to chide, etc.

104, 5. **That, lapsed ... command**? who, having allowed the time to pass in inactivity and passionate regrets, has failed to carry out your dread command, a matter of such pressing importance; for **important**, cp. *C. E.* v. 1. 138, "At your *important* letters."

109. **amazement ... sits**, utter bewilderment has settled down upon your mother; has taken entire possession of her.

110. **step ... soul**, interpose to save her from being overpowered by the emotions now struggling in her heart.

111. **Conceit ... works**, imagination works most powerfully in those who, like women, are physically weakest.

113, 4. **Alas ... vacancy**, alas, it is not you who should ask how I am, but I who should ask how you are, what has come over you, that you look so fixedly upon mere empty space.

115. **incorporal**, incorporeal, immaterial.

116. **Forth .. peep**, from your eyes your soul looks out in wild amazement.

117-9. **And .. end**, and, like soldiers awakened by the signal of the enemy being at hand, your hair, a moment ago lying still upon your head, starts up and stands erect, like inanimate matter suddenly endowed with life; **the soldiers**, here the defines the situation of soldiers in particular circumstances; **alarm**, a cry to arms, from Ital. *all' arme*, to arms! **excrements**, anything separate from the body, such as hair, nails; from Lat. "*excretum*, supine of *excernere*, to sift out, separate, with suffix *-mentum*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

122. **how pale he glares**, how pale he looks as he glares upon us.

123, 4. **His form .. capable**, his appearance, coupled with the reason of that appearance, if appealing to the very stones, would stir them to feeling. For **capable**, = susceptible, receptive, cp *A. Y. L.* iii. 5. 23, "The cicatrice and *capable* impressure."

125, 6. **convert .. effects**, turn my action from its proper sternness to pity. Singer would read *affects*, *i.e.* dispositions, affection of the mind, as in *Oth.* i. 3. 264, "Not to comply with heat—the young *affects*, In me defunct."

126, 7. **then what . colour**, then the vengeance which I have to take will lack that justification which it would otherwise have, cp. *J. C.* ii. 1. 29, "And, since the quarrel Will bear no *colour* for the thing he is, Fashion it thus."

127. **tears .. blood**, and instead of shedding the blood of the murderer, I shall perhaps only shed tears of pity from my own eyes.

129. **is**, exists, is not "a false creation Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain," *Macb.* ii. 1. 38, 9.

131. **steals away**, gradually vanishes.

132. **in his ... lived**, in the very dress he wore when alive.

135, 6. **This bodiless ... in**, madness is very skilful in giving birth to such illusions of the sight.

137, 8. **doth .. music**, beats with as regular and healthy a rhythm as yours; its pulsations are as indicative of a sound frame of mind as yours.

140. **re-word**, repeat word for word.

140, 1. **which madness ... from**, whereas a madman would wander in fantastic fashion from the subject.

142. **for love of grace**, as you hope for pardon; **grace**, the grace of God; for the omission of the definite article before **love**, see Abb. § 89.

142, 3. **Lay not ... speaks**, do not try to soothe your soul by imagining to yourself that it is not your sin but my madness which calls aloud in this way.

144-6. **It will ... unseen**, to do so will, instead of healing the sore, only cover it as with a film, while rank corruption, eating into the core of your soul, poisons it unnoticed; the open sore may be treated, the sore skinned over will prevent the progress of the disease from being seen, though it is going on all the time and can only end in death.

147. **avoid ... come**, avoid sin in the future.

148, 9. **And do not .. ranker**, and do not make what is already so foul still fouler by self-deception and hypocrisy; **compost**, mixture, composition, manure; cp. *composture*, *Tim.* iv. 3. 444, "The earth 's a thief, That feeds and breeds by a *composture* stolen From general excrement."

149. **Forgive . virtue**, forgive me for this virtuous indignation. Staunton puts a comma after **this**, and marks the passage down to l. 152 as an *Aside*.

150. **For in ... times**, for in these times of gross and pampered indulgence; **pursy**, literally short-winded, here short-winded from over-indulgence. Cp. *Tim.* v. 4. 12, "*pursy* insolence shall break his wind With fear and horrid flight."

152. **curb**, "'bend and truckle.' From F. *courber*. So in the *Vision of Piers Plowghman*, "Thanne I *courbed* on my knees, And cried hire of grace" (Steevens).

154. **worser**, for instances of the double comparative, see Abb. § 11.

155. **the purer**, all the purer; by so much the purer; **the**, ablative case of the demonstrative.

157. **Assume .. not**, act as though you were virtuous, even if you have not the feeling.

158, 9. **That monster ... this**, "that monster, Custom, who destroys all natural feeling and prevents it from being exerted, and is the malignant attendant on habits, is yet angel in this respect, etc. The double meaning of the word 'habits' suggested the 'frock or livery' in l. 164 [161]" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

160 2. **That .. put on**, that, to accustom us to the practice of good actions, he, besides what else he does, furnishes us with the garb of virtue which we can easily put on, if we so desire.

164, 5. **And either ... potency**, and either completely overcome the devil, or at least expel him from our nature with irresistible force. The reading in the text is a conjecture of Jennings; various other conjectures have been made, *e.g. curb*, *lay*, *lodge*, *quell*, *shame*; *overcome*, the earlier quartos giving "And either the devil," the later, "And master the devil."

166, 7. **And when . you**, and when you crave for a blessing from heaven, thus showing your contrition, I will ask of you a mother's blessing : **For**, as regards.

168-70. **but heaven .. minister**, but heaven has pleased that it should be so, viz., that I should be its instrument of vengeance in order that I might be punished by being guilty of this man's death, and this man be punished by my act : **heaven** as a plural occurs frequently in Shakespeare, *e.g. R. II.* i. 2. 6, *Oth.* iv. 2. 47, *Per.* i. 4. 16.

171. **bestow him**, get rid of his dead body : **answer well**; justify myself; render a good account of my act in killing him; cp. *Lear*, i. 3. 10, "the fault of it I'll *answer*"; *Cymb.* i. 4. 170, "Only thus far you shall *answer*."

173. **I must ... kind**, I must be cruel in words only to be kind in reality, *i.e.* my reproaches are necessary to make you see your conduct in its right light, and so bring you to a better manner of life.

174. **Thus bad ... behind**, thus my harsh words must be followed by even harsher measures, *sc.* the punishment of the king.

176. **Not this, ... do**, do anything in the world except this that I bid you do.

177. **bloat**, bloated by excess, especially in drinking.

178. **Pinch ... check**, make you wanton with his caresses : **mouse**, a term of endearment common in Shakespeare's day; cp. *T. N.* i. 5. 69, "good my *mouse* of virtue."

179-81. **Make you ... craft**, make you confess that I am not mad in reality, but only pretend to be so in order to effect my objects; **ravel .. out**, unravel; used of the gradual process of extracting Hamlet's secret, disentangling, as it were, the knotted skein.

182-4. **For who ... hide?** for who but one that has everything that can ennoble a woman—rank, beauty, virtue, wisdom—would think of hiding a secret of such vital importance from a filthy creature like your husband; **concernings**, cp. *M. M.* i. i. 57, "As time and our *concernings* shall importune"; **paddock**, toad; cp. *Macb.* i. 1. 9; **gib**, more commonly *gib-cat*, a male cat.

185. **No, in despite ... secrecy**, no, in spite of the secrecy which common sense would bid you maintain.

188. **To try conclusions**, to make experiment.

189. **break ... down**, break your neck by falling headlong in your effort to fly like a bird. The anecdote in question has never been discovered, but "the reference," as the Cl. Pr. Edd. point out, "must be to some fable in which an ape opened a basket containing live birds, then crept into it himself, and 'to

try conclusions,' whether he could fly like them, jumped out and broke his neck."

190-2. **Be thou ... me**, rest assured that, if words are made of breath, and breath is made of life, it is not in me to breathe your secret to any one; for a similar play upon **life** in two different senses, cp. *H. V.* iv. 2. 53-5, "Description cannot suit itself in words To demonstrate the *life* of such a battle In *life* so lifeless as it shows itself."

193. **I must to England**, we are not informed how Hamlet became aware of this, unless he overheard the king's conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

194. **concluded**, determined.

195. **There 's letters**, for the singular verb preceding a plural subject, see Abb. § 335.

196. **as**, just as much, *i.e.* no more; **fang'd**, with their fangs still in them; of course the poison is not in the fang itself, but in the poison-bag at the back of it.

197, 8. **They must . . knavery**, it is for them to make the path smooth for me, and to lead me where the villanous scheme of the king may be put into execution; the original sense of the substantive *marshall* is 'horse-servant,' thence an attendant generally, and later on a title of honour: **Let it work**, let the scheme go on.

199, 200. **For 'tis ... petar**, for it is the finest sport in the world to see the engineer blown into the air by his own engine of destruction; **the sport**, for the emphatic definite article, see Abb. § 92, and for the form **enginer**, § 443; **Hoist**, probably the past participle of the old verb to *hoise*, or perhaps an instance of the omission of the participial termination; **petar**, a war engine filled with explosive materials.

200-2. **and 't shall ... moon**, and it will be strange if I do not manage to drive my mine beneath theirs and blow them high into the air; **'t shall go hard**, *i.e.* the difficulty must be a great one if I do not manage to overcome it; for **at**, = up to, see Abb. § 143. Mines in besieging a fortress, etc., are made useless by running a counter mine at a short depth below or directly opposite them, and breaking down the intervening space by the explosion of gunpowder, when those working in them will be blown into the air.

203. **when ... meet**, when two skilful designs come into direct opposition; the figure of the counter mine is still kept up.

204. **set me packing**, hurry me off about my business; in **packing** there is perhaps the idea of contriving which is often found in Shakespeare, though here it does not seem to be the primary one.

205. **lug** ... **guts**, both words used in a contemptuous way, though **guts** had not the vulgar sense which it has since acquired : **neighbour**, used as an adjective.

208. **prating**, chattering, fond of idle talk.

209. **to draw** ... **you**, that I may have done with you ; that I may put the finishing touch to this business.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

1. **matter**, something of importance, something material : **profound**, drawn from the depths of your heart, and so deep in significance.

2. **translate**, explain the meaning of : **'tis fit**, it is only right.

4. **Bestow** .. **while**, be good enough to leave us alone for a short time.

6. **How does Hamlet** ? what is the state of Hamlet's mind ?

8. **which**, as to which ; on the question which.

10. **Whips out**, he hastily draws ; for the ellipsis of the nominative, see Abb. § 399.

11. **brainish apprehension**, mad-brained fancy ; the suffix *-ish*, having, as often, a contemptuous signification.

13. **It had** ... **there**, I myself should have fared as Polonius has, if I had been in his place. The king's first thought is a selfish one.

14. **His liberty**, the fact of his being allowed to go at large ; **threats**, risk, danger.

16. **how shall** ... **answer'd**, what excuse shall we be able to make for ourselves in regard to this deed ?

17-9. **It will** ... **man**, the blame of the deed will be laid upon us for not having used the precaution of keeping this madman under restraint where he could not have come in contact with any one ; **short**, "opposed to *loose*, iv. 3. 2" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

20. **We** ... **understand**, we deliberately refused to perceive : we purposely shut our eyes to ; the king cannot help being a hypocrite even to himself and his queen.

21. **owner**, one subject to.

22. **To keep** ... **divulging**, rather than let it be known.

23. **pith of life**, the vital parts.

24. **To draw apart**, to put out of the way so that no harm may come to it.

25-7. **O'er whom** ... **done**, over which he shed tears of repentance, his very madness showing in this a touch of soundness, like

a vein of pure ore in the midst of mines of base metal; **ore**, probably used for the finest of ores, gold; for **mineral**, = mine, Steevens compares Hall's *Satires*, "Shall it not be a wild-fig in a wall. Or fired brimstone in a *minerall?*" Staunton takes the word for metallic vein, lode.

29. **shall ... touch**, gild the mountains with its first rays.

30. **But**, than.

31, 2. **We must, ... excuse**, we must use all our authority as king to put a good face upon, and all our skill in special pleading to excuse, the deed; cp. *Macb.* iii. 1. 118-20, "Though I could With barefaced power sweep him from my sight, And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not For certain friends that are both his and mine," *i.e.* because of motives of policy.

33. **join you ... aid**, take others to help you.

36. **speak fair**, use gentle language to him.

38. **call up**, summon to our assistance.

40. **so, haply, slander**, in that way if we take those measures, perhaps slander; the quartos and folios here mark a hiatus; Theobald conjectured '*for*, haply, slander,' which, with Capell's substitution of 'so' for 'for,' has been accepted by most modern editors

41-4. **Whose whisper .. air**, whose poisonous whisper flies from end to end of the world as unerringly and as fatally as the cannon-ball to its mark, may pass by us and only hit the air which feels no wound; **blank**, the white disc, now the 'gold,' in a target, from F. *blanc*, white; for **woundless air**, cp. *Macb.* v. 8. 9, "the intrenchant air."

45. **discord**, in not knowing what course to take, one moment suggesting one, another moment suggesting another: **dismay**, in anticipating what others may do in consequence of Polonius's death.

SCENE II.

1. **stowed**, put away.

6. **Compounded ... kin**, mixed with the earth of which it was originally formed; cp. the Burial Service, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 5. 116, "Only *compound* me with forgotten dust."

11. **Keep your counsel**, keep your secret; referring perhaps to his discovery, in ii. 2. 284, 5, that they had been sent to sound him.

12. **Besides ... sponge**! besides, to think of my being questioned by a fellow like you, who would get everything out of me,

suck me dry, with the same insidiousness that a sponge sucks up water! Some editors follow the quartos and folios in putting a comma, instead of a note of admiration, after **sponge**; with that punctuation the meaning will be, 'in the case of one's being questioned,' etc.

12, 3. **what ... king**? what sort of answer do you expect to receive from one, like me, of royal birth? do you expect that such a one would submit to be sucked dry by a fellow like you? Rushton says that **replication** is "an exception of the second degree made by the plaintiff upon the answer of a defendant." In the jargon of Holofernes, *L. L. L.* iv. 2. 15, the word is used, as here, for 'reply'; in *J. C.* i. 1. 51, for 'echo.'

15. **countenance**, favour.

16. **authorities**, the several attributes of power; cp. *Lear*, i. 3. 17.

17. **like an ... nuts**, as an ape does nuts: the later quartos read "like an apple," for which Farmer conjectured 'like an ape, an apple'; the reading in the text is that of the first quarto, and is adopted by Staunton and Furness.

18. **mouthed**, taken into his mouth.

19. **gleaned**, picked up in the way of information: **it is but squeezing you**, all he needs to do is to squeeze you like a sponge.

22. a **knavish ... ear**, I am glad you should not understand it, as that shows you are only a fool, fools never seeing the point of knavish words.

25, 6. **The body ... thing**, various subtle meanings have been read into these words, but they were probably used for no other purpose than that of mystifying Guildenstern—and commentators.

28, 9. **Hide fox, and all after**, an allusion to the game of hide and seek, in which one of the players, called the fox, hides, and all the rest have to go after him and find out his hiding-place. Here, of course, merely a continuation of Hamlet's feigned madness.

SCENE III.

1. **him**, Hamlet.

2. **goes loose**, is allowed his freedom.

3. **Yet must ... him**, yet it will not do for me to employ the full force of the law against him, take such extreme measures as the law would allow.

4. **of**, by; **distracted**, weak-brained.

5. **Who like ... eyes**, whose liking depends not upon the use of their judgement, but, etc.

6. **the offender's scourge**, the provocation the offender has received; that by which he has been lashed into furious deeds.

7-9. **To bear .. pause**, in order that things may go smoothly, not excite opposition, this sending him away so suddenly must be made to seem the result of deliberate calculation.

14. **without**, outside: **guarded ... pleasure**, under a guard till it be known what it is your pleasure should be done.

20, 1. **a certain ... him**, a certain assemblage of discriminating worms, worms that know what they like, are even now engaged upon him; an allusion to the Diet of Worms.

21, 2. **Your worm ... diet**, the worm you and I know so well is the only real emperor as regards diet; for **your**, used in this colloquial sense, see Abb. § 220: **fat**, fatten.

24, 5. **but ... table**, two dishes served in a different way, but placed before the same company; cp. *Westward Ho!* i. 2, "an excellent pickled goose, *a new service*," *i.e.* dressed in a new way: for **variable**, cp. iii. 1. 172: **the end**, what it all comes to.

30. **go a progress**, an allusion to the royal 'progresses,' journeys of state, so common in England in former days.

33. **send thither to see**, Delius points out that the king would not be able himself to get to heaven to make the inquiry.

34. **the other place**, hell.

35. **nose**, smell; cp. *Cor.* v. 1. 28, "to *nose* the offence."

38. **He will ... come**, you need not be afraid of his running away, he's fast enough there.

40. **tender**, hold precious; see note on i. 3. 107.

41. **must ... hence**, will render it necessary for you to leave Denmark. The king pretends that it is no wish of his, but a necessary consequence of the deed, as though Hamlet would be seized by the very multitude who he had just before said loved him too much to allow any harm to be done to him.

42. **with fiery quickness**, "with hot haste" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

43. **the wind at help**, the wind favourable; for **at**, in place of the prefix *a-*, as in *asleep*, *afoot*, etc., see Abb. § 143.

44. **The associates tend**, the companions I have chosen for your voyage are in readiness for you: **bent**, directed, in trim.

45. **For England!** in order that he may not be suspected of having made any plans of his own to baffle the king's design, Hamlet pretends to be surprised at the information.

46. **So it is ... purposes**, it *is* well, as you would allow if you knew, etc.

53. **at foot**, at his heels, closely; **tempt ... aboard**, persuade him to go on board as quickly as you can.

54. **I 'll have him hence**, I am determined that he shall sail.

55, 6. **for every ... affair**, for everything else that depends upon the management of this business is thoroughly complete.

57. **if my love ... aught**, if you in the least value my love.

58. **As my ... sense**, and the greatness of my power may well teach you to do so.

59, 60. **Since yet .. sword**, since the chastisement you received at our hands is still fresh in your memory; **cicatrice**, scar.

60. **free awe**, "awe still felt, though no longer enforced by the presence of Danish armies" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

61. **homage**, *i.e.* the homage of being ready to carry out our injunctions.

61, 2. **thou mayst ... process**, you may not treat with indifference our royal mandate; for **process**; cp. *A. C.* i. 1. 28, "Where 's Fulvia's *process?*" The Cl. Pr. Edd. point out that **set** "would not have been thus used had it not been familiar in the phrases 'set at nought,' 'set at a pin's fee,' etc."

62-4. **which imports ... Hamlet**, the full tenour of which as explained by letters sent with it, and enforcing it with adjurations of the same purport, is that Hamlet should at once be put to death; **conjuring** is the reading of the folios, the quartos giving *congruing*, the objection to which is its tautology.

65. **For like ... rages**, for the effect which his existence has upon me is like that of a hectic fever on the blood, *i.e.* causing it to burn violently; **hectic**, properly an adjective = continual, habitual, and especially applied of old to fevers; now used only in the sense of consumptive, as 'a *hectic* cough,' 'a *hectic* colour (of the face).'

66. **And thou .. me**, and to you I must look for a cure for this disease of mine.

67. **Howe'er ... begun**, whatever may happen to me, I can never feel that the happiness I long for has begun.

SCENE IV.

1. **from me greet**, bear my greetings to.

2. **by his license**, if he will allow it.

3, 4. **Craves ... kingdom**, desires that, according to promise, he may be allowed to transport his forces across Denmark: **the rendezvous**, the appointed place of meeting; Fr. *rendez*, 2nd person plural, imperative, of *rendre*, to render, bring, and *vous*, the

plural of the 2nd personal pronoun; a military term for the place appointed for soldiers to assemble.

5. **would ... us,** wishes to see us for any purpose.

6. **We shall ... eye,** we shall be ready to appear before him in person and do homage to him; for **in his eye**, Steevens compares *A. C.* ii. 2. 212, "Her gentlewomen ... tended her *i' the eyes*," and says "the phrase seems to have been a formulary for the royal presence."

7. **And let him know so,** and therefore tell him so. For this change of construction, cp. *M. A.* v. 1. 303, 4, "I do embrace your offer; and dispose (*i.e.* do you dispose) For henceforth of poor Claudio."

8. **softly,** slowly; *i.e.* with the troops under your command.

9. **powers,** forces; as frequently in Shakespeare.

10. **of Norway,** belonging to Norway.

11. **How purposed,** with what object have they marched hither?

15, 6. **Goes it . frontier?** is the expedition directed against the mainland of Poland, or only some outlying portion of that kingdom?

17. **with no addition,** without exaggeration.

18. **to gain,** to make ourselves masters of.

19. **That hath .. name,** whose only value lies in the name of possession.

20. **To pay ... it,** I would not pay five ducats, not even five, for the lease of it.

21. **Norway,** the king of Norway.

22. **ranker,** higher; literally more exuberant in growth: **sold in fee,** sold out and out, not merely farmed; a 'fee' originally signified an estate feudally held of another person, and an estate in fee simple is the greatest estate or interest which the law of England allows any person to possess in landed property.

23. **then,** if it is worth no more than that.

25, 6. **Two thousand .. straw,** the decision of this petty quarrel will cost the lives of at least two thousand men, and the waste of, etc.; for **debate,** = decide by combat, cp. *Lucr.* 1421, "It seem'd they would *debate* with angry swords"; the word is from the O. F. *debatre*, to beat down.

27, 9. **This is ... dies,** this morbid desire in the body politic to quarrel about nothing, a desire due to superabundance of wealth and the idleness of a long peace, is like an abscess in the physical body which bursts inwardly without showing any visible cause

of the man's death; *i.e.* this readiness to quarrel merely for the sake of quarrelling shows an unhealthy condition in a state; so, in i. *H. IV.* iv. 2. 32, the idle, discontented, fellows whom Falstaff enlists are called "the *cankers of a calm world and a long peace*"; **imposthume,** from "O. F. *apostume,* an 'inward swelling full of corrupt matter'; Cot.—Lat. *apostema,* an abscess.—Gk. ἀπόστημα, a standing away from; hence a separation of corrupt matter ... Here the prefix *im-* is due to mere corruption" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

30. **God .. you,** merely a courteous form of bidding farewell.

32. **How all . me,** how everything that happens seems to denounce my irresolution! **inform against me,** being a charge against me as informers do against guilty persons; cp. *R. II.* ii. 1. 242, "what they will *inform* .. *'gainst* any of us all."

34. **market of his time,** that for which he brings his time for sale as beasts are brought on market-day.

35. **a beast, no more,** thus making himself no better than a brute beast.

36, 7. **made us . after,** endowed us with such comprehensive faculties, faculties which concern themselves with both the future and the past; not like those of brute beasts which seem concerned with the present moment only.

39. **to fust,** to grow fusty, mouldy; literally 'tasting of the cask,' from O. F. *fuste,* a cask.

40. **craven,** cowardly: literally one who sues for mercy.

41. **Of thinking,** which consists in thinking: **precisely,** minutely.

42, 3. **A thought .. coward,** a mode of thinking which, if quartered, will be found to be made up of one part of wisdom to three parts of cowardice.

44. **'This ...do,'** this act still remains to be done; for the infinitive active where we use the passive, see Abb. § 359.

45. **Sith,** see note on ii. 2. 6.

46. **Examples . me,** so plain and material that the dullest man could not fail to recognize them as such.

47. **Witness,** for instance; literally 'let this army witness'; **charge,** cost.

48. **delicate and tender,** brought up in ease and luxury, and so not naturally inclined to such rough work.

50. **Makes ... event,** laughs at the possible consequences; cp. ii. 2. 344, "*makes mows.*"

51. **mortal,** liable to death.

53. **an egg-shell,** the merest, most worthless, trifle.

54. **Is not to stir,** Furness thinks that the negative belongs to the copula, and that there should be a comma after **not**: **argument,** cause of quarrel.

55. **But greatly ... straw,** but to be prompt to find in the slightest trifle provocation for fighting.

56. **When ... stake,** when honour is concerned; when it is honour that is the subject of attack; cp. *T. N.* iii. 1. 129, "Have you not set mine honour *at the stake* And baited it with all unmuzzled thoughts ... ?" Schmidt takes **at the stake,** as equivalent to 'at stake,' as in *Oth.* iv. 2. 13.

56-9. **How stand ... sleep?** how unworthy is my position, then, who though my father has been murdered and my mother's good fame destroyed,—facts which should be sufficient to stir both my reason and my passion,—still allow things to remain exactly as they were without making the smallest effort to remedy them.

61. **for a ... fame,** for the sake of such a fanciful whim as the desire of fame; for **trick,** in this sense, cp. *M. M.* iii. 1. 114; "Why would he for a momentary *trick* Be perdurably fined?" Schmidt takes **trick** as = trifle, as in *Cor.* iv. 4. 21.

62. **like beds,** as readily as they would to their beds: **plot,** small strip of land.

63. **Whereon ... cause,** too small to hold the combatants for it.

64. **which is ... continent,** which is not large enough to be the tomb and cover; **continent,** that which contains; cp. *A. C.* iv. 4. 40, "Heart once be stronger than thy *continent,* Crack thy frail case!"

SCENE V.

2. **indeed distract,** not merely importunate, but quite out of her senses; for **distract,** cp. i. 2. 20, "*disjoint* and out of frame."

3. **Her mood ... pitied,** it is impossible not to pity her condition; for **will,** see Abb. § 319.

5. **There 's tricks i' the world,** there are strange doings going on in the world; cp. *K. J.* i. 1. 232, "There's toys abroad": **heart,** breast.

6. **Spurns ... straws,** kicks impatiently at straws in her path; is angry at the merest trifles; cp. *A. C.* iii. 5. 17, 8, where it is said of Antony in a bad temper that he "*spurns The rush* that lies before him": **in doubt,** in dubious language.

7-13. **her speech ... unhappily,** her words in themselves convey no distinct meaning, yet, used as they are in such disorder, they provoked their hearers to try to gather some meaning from them, to piece them together, so that they may give a coherent sense; they (*sc.* the hearers) make a guess at that sense, and clumsily

endeavour to suit the words to the interpretation they put upon them; and those words, as they are eked out by her winks, nods, and gestures, would certainly lead one to suppose that they possibly contain the thought of some great misfortune of which she is conscious, though conscious only in a dim, confused way.

14. **strew**, unintentionally suggest.

15. **ill-breeding minds**, minds always ready to conceive evil, to put the worst construction upon anything said.

17. **To my ... is**, to my soul, ill at ease with itself, as is always the case when guilt is present to it; cp. above, iii. 1. 83, "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

18. **toy**, trifle: **amiss**, disaster; for the word used as a substantive, cp. *Sonn.* xxxv. 7, "Myself corrupting, salving thy *amiss*"; and cli. 3.

19, 20. **So full ... spilt**, so full of clumsy suspicion is guilt that it betrays itself in the very fear of being discovered; for **jealousy**, = suspicion, cp. *M. A.* ii. 2. 49, "There shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that *jealousy* shall be called assurance." The metaphor is that of a man who carrying a liquid is so excited by his fear of spilling it that the nervous feeling causes his hand to tremble and the liquid to run over.

23, 4. **know from**, distinguish from.

25, 6. **By his ... shoon**, by his wearing the habit of a pilgrim; cockle-shells were worn by pilgrims in their hats as emblematical of their crossing the sea to visit the Holy Land; **sandal shoon**, shoes formed of sandals worn under, and attached by straps to, the feet; **shoon**, an archaic plural.

28. **Say you?** what is it you say?

31, 2. **At his .. stone**, graves of the poorer classes, especially in village churchyards, are generally covered with grass with a slab of stone at the foot having the date of birth, death, etc., engraved upon it.

35. **shroud**, grave-clothes, winding-sheet.

37. **Larded**, thickly covered; cp. *M. W.* iv. 6. 14, "The mirth so *larded* with my matter"; the word in this sense is generally used by Shakespeare in a figurative sense.

38, 9. **Which ... showers**, the shroud of him who went to his grave bewept with showers of tears by his faithful lover.

41. **'ild**, yield, in the sense of reward.

41, 2. **They say ... daughter**, an allusion to a story, told by Douce, of Christ paying a visit to a baker's shop and asking for a piece of bread, when the daughter rebuked her mother for giving Him too large a piece, and as a punishment for her niggard behaviour was transformed into an owl.

43. **God ... table**, be present with you when you eat.

44. **Conceit ... father**, her fancy dwells upon her father's death.

45. **let 's have ... this**, let us have no dispute about this.

47. **Saint Valentine's day**. On the feast of St. Valentine, birds, according to an old tradition, chose their mates for the year. "From this notion," says Dyer, p. 280, "it has been suggested, arose the once popular practice of choosing valentines, and also the common belief that the first two single persons who meet in the morning of St. Valentine's day have a great chance of becoming married to each other." Douce traces the custom of choosing lovers on this day to the *Lupercalia* of Rome, a festival held about the same date, and during which a similar custom prevailed.

48. **All .. betime**, at the earliest dawn of day; **all**, merely intensive.

49. **at your window**, greeting you at your window.

53. **cannot ... weep**, cannot help weeping; cannot choose to do anything but weep; **to think**, at the thought that; the infinitive used indefinitely.

57. **give ... watch**, watch her carefully.

61, 2. **they come ... battalions**, they do not come like single spies sent to discover the strength of the enemy, but in full force to attack his position.

63, 4. **and he ... remove**, and he by his violence the cause of his richly-deserved banishment; for **remove**, = removal, cp. *Lear*, ii. 4. 4, "This night before there was no purpose in them Of this *remove*": **muddied**, like a stream made muddy by heavy rain. Delius points out that this word and **unwholesome** refer primarily to the blood, and then to the mood of the people.

65. **Thick ... whispers**, their thoughts and their language, so far as they dare let it be heard, are polluted with unwholesome matter, *i.e.* dangerous ideas.

66. **For**, on account of; **greenly**, without ripe judgement; cp. *Oth.* ii. 1. 251, "the knave .. hath all those requisites in him that folly and *green* minds look after"; *A. C.* i. 5. 74, "My salad days, When I was *green* in judgement."

67. **In hugger-mugger**, in this secret and hasty way; a reduplication like *hotch-potch*, *hocus-pocus*, *mingle-mangle*. Malone quotes Florio's *Dictionary*, "Dinascoso, secretly, hiddenly, in hugger-mugger."

68. **Divided ... judgement**, estranged from her own sane judgement; out of her senses; cp. v. 2. 219.

69. **the which**, see Abb. § 270: **are pictures**, are no better than pictures.

70. **and as . these**, and a circumstance as full of import as all these put together.

72. **Feeds on his wonder**, broods over the amazement caused by his father's death: **keeps .. clouds**, shuts himself up in gloomy reserve.

73. **wants not**, is not without: **buzzers**, chattering fellows; fellows who go buzzing about him like noxious insects.

74. **of his father's death**, as to the manner in which his father met his death.

75-7. **Wherein .. ear**, in which suggestions the speaker, driven by necessity to substantiate his story, and having no actual circumstances to bring as proof, will not hesitate to accuse me from one person to another.

78. **a murdering-piece**, or murderer, was a cannon which discharged case-shot, *i.e.* shot confined in a case which burst in the discharge and scattered the shot widely; hence the **superfluous death** in the next line, any one of the missiles being sufficient to cause death.

80. **my Switzers**, Swiss mercenaries were frequently employed as personal guards of the king in continental countries and even now form the Pope's body guard.

82. **overpeering of his list**, when it raises its head above the boundary which usually confines it; the idea is that of the great billows raising their crests as they dash over the shore; **list**, limit, literally a stripe or border of cloth; for the verbal followed by **of**, see Abb. § 178.

83. **Eats not the flats**, does not swallow up the level stretches of country; cp. *K. J.* v. 6. 40, "half my power this night Passing these *flats* are *taken by the tide*."

84. **in a riotous head**, with an armed force of riotous citizens; for **head**, cp. i. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 25, "a *head* Of gallant warriors."

85. **call him lord**, acknowledge his supremacy.

86. **as the world ... begin**, as though the world had only now to be started on its career.

87. **Antiquity ... known**, antiquity being treated by them as something that never had any existence, and custom as something which needed no recognition.

88, 9. **The ratifiers ... king'**, they, as though it rested with them to ratify or annul, to support or overturn, every proposition, cry, etc.

90. **Caps ... clouds**, throwing up their caps, clapping their hands, and shouting at the top of their voices, they applaud their own decision to the very skies.

92. **How cheerfully ... cry!** with what "gallant chiding"

(*M. N. D.* iv. 1. 120) these hounds hunt the false scent which they have so eagerly taken up! for **cry**, cp. *T. S. Ind.* i. 23, "He *cried* upon it at the merest loss," said of a hound.

93. **this is counter**, to hunt counter was to hunt the wrong way of the scent, to trace the scent backwards; and here two ideas are combined, that of being on the wrong scent, and that of being on the right scent, but hunting back in the direction from which the game started instead of in the direction in which it had gone.

96. **give me leave**, allow me to enter alone.

98. **keep the door**, guard the door to prevent any aid being sent to the king.

102. **That thy ... giant-like**? that you have broken out into a rebellion which has assumed such terrible proportions?

103. **Let him go**, do not try to hold him back.

104. **hedge**, protect as with a hedge which cannot be passed or overleaped.

105, 6. **That treason ... will**, that treason is unable to do more than look over the hedge which separates it from the object of its vengeance, without being able to strike home.

110. **Let him .. full**, let him state his demands in full.

111. **How ... dead**? how came he to die?

113. **grace**, religious feeling; cp. *R. J.* ii. 3. 28, "Two such opposed kings encamp them still In man as well as herbs, *grace* and rude will."

114. **I dare damnation**, in such a cause as this I am ready to risk eternal damnation: **To this .. stand**, here I firmly take my stand; this decision I am prepared to abide by.

115-7. **That both ... father**, that, come what may, I will give up all my hopes of happiness here and hereafter, rather than not pursue my vengeance for my father. The Cl. Pr. Edd. compare *Macb.* iii. 2. 16, "But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer."

118. **My will ... world**, nothing in the world but my own free will.

119, 20. **And for .. little**, and as regards the means at my command, I will make such prudent use of them that, though small, they shall go far.

122. **is 't writ in your revenge**, is it a part of the revenge you have prescribed to yourself?

123, 4. **That, ... loser**, "are you going to vent your rage on both friend and foe; like a gambler who insists on sweeping the stakes [off the table], whether the point is in his favour or not?" (Moberly).

127. **life-rendering pelican**, from allowing its young to take fish out of its pouch, the pelican was popularly believed to nourish them on its life-blood; cp. *R. II.* ii. 1. 126, "That blood already, like the *pelican*, Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused."

128. **Repast**, feed, nourish.

129. **good**, duteous.

131. **And am** ... **it**, and am deeply pained by it.

132, 3. **It shall** ... **eye**, it shall force its way as directly to your judgement as the daylight; **It**, the nominative repeated owing to the parenthesis of l. 131.

135. **heat**, *i.e.* the heat burning in his head: **seven times**, *i.e.* many times: cp. the heating of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

136. **the sense** ... **eye**, that sensibility and property by which the eye is enabled to see; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 348, "The *virtue of your eye* must break my oath."

137, 8. **thy madness** ... **scale**, I will exact such retribution as shall be more than adequate to the deed which has driven you mad; **turn the beam**, cause the beam of the balance to bow owing to the greater weight in our scale.

138. **of May** ! *i.e.* in the bloom of life's spring-time.

141. **mortal**, subject to destruction.

142-4. **Nature** .. **loves**, where love is concerned, nature shows herself in her tenderest form, and in such cases it sends some precious proof of itself (here Ophelia's soundness of mind) as a tribute of affection to follow to the grave that which was so dear to it (here her father); for **instance**, see note on iii. 2. 176.

145. **barefaced**; with his face uncovered.

146. **Hey non** ... **nonny**, "Such unmeaning burdens are common in ballads of most languages" (Nares).

149, 50. **Hadst thou** ... **thus**, no words of persuasion that you could urge, if you were in your senses, could stir me to revenge as these disjointed, incoherent, utterances.

152. **An**, if; see Abb. § 101.

153. **the wheel**, according to Steevens, the refrain; but the quotation by which he supports his explanation is generally regarded as mythical. Malone is inclined to think that the allusion is to the occupation of the girl whose song Ophelia quotes. Among other passages in some way bearing out his view he quotes *T. N.* ii. 4. 45-7, "The spinsters and the knitters in the sun .. Do use to chant it"; he further suggests as possible that the allusion may be to an instrument called by Chaucer a *rote*, which was played upon by the friction of a *wheel*.

153, 4. **It is** ... **daughter**, the ballad is on the subject of the false steward who, etc. No such ballad has yet been discovered.

155. **This nothing 's ... matter,** these incoherent words stir my soul more than sensible ones would.

156. **rosemary,** from Lat. *ros marinus,* or *ros maris,* as Ovid calls it, the plant which delights in the sea spray. It was an emblem of faithful remembrance, and, according to Staunton, is here presented to Laertes, whom Ophelia in her distraction probably confounds with her lover; **for,** appropriate to, emblematical of.

157. **pansies,** from F. *pensées,* thoughts, of which the flower is supposed to be symbolical.

158. **document,** a writer in the *Ed. Rev.* for July 1869 shows that the word is here used "in its earlier and etymological sense of instruction, lesson, teaching."

159. **fitted,** each with its fitting emblem.

160. **fennel ... columbines,** presented to the king as emblems of cajolery and ingratitude: **there 's rue for you,** said to the queen.

161, 2. **we may .. Sundays.** "Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on Sundays, when she solicits pardon for the crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her 'rue' herb of grace" . . (Malone).

162. **with a difference,** according to the writer in the *Ed. Rev.* already quoted, one of the properties of *rue* was that of checking immodest thoughts,—a herb therefore appropriate to the queen.

163. **a daisy,** it does not appear to whom the daisy is given; according to Greene, quoted by Henley, it was a "dissembling" flower, and was used as a warning to young girls not to trust the fair promises of men: **violets,** emblematical of fidelity.

164. **made a good end,** died as a good man should die, at peace with all men and trusting to God's mercy; cp. *H. V.* ii. 3. 13, "A' *made a finer end* and went away an it had been any christom child."

166. **Thought,** melancholy; cp. *A. C.* iv. 6. 35. "If swift *thought* break it not (*sc.* his heart), a swifter mean Shall outstrike *thought*; but *thought* will do 't, I feel": **passion,** suffering: **hell itself,** the most terrible thoughts.

167. **She turns ... prettiness,** she lends a grace and attractiveness by the words in which she clothes them.

172. **Go ... deathbed,** *i.e.* you need never hope to see him again however long you may live; corresponding with l. 177.

175. **All flaxen,** as white as flax; **all,** intensive.

177. **And we ... moan,** and we but waste our moans.

179. **And of ... souls,** "Many epitaphs closed with such a pious prayer as this" (Cl. Pr. Edd.). For instances of **of,** used for *on,* see Abb. §§ 175, 181.

180, 1. **I must ... right**, you do me wrong unless you allow me to commune with you in your grief, *i.e.* unless you tell me what your wishes are in regard to your father's death, and allow me to counsel you in the matter.

181, 2. **Go but .. will**, do but go aside and choose out from your friends those who are likely to give you the best advice.

184, 5. **If by .. touch'd**, if their verdict is that I am implicated in this crime directly or indirectly; **find**, used in the technical sense of the finding of a jury; cp. v. 1. 4.

188 **Be you ... us**, allow yourself patiently to listen to what I have to say.

189, 90. **And we ... content**, and you will find that I shall endeavour as earnestly as yourself to give peace to your mind: **labour .. soul**, labour with you heart and soul.

191. **His means of death**, the manner of his death.

192. **No trophy**, in which there was no memorial erected to him; properly a monument to mark the spot at which the enemy turned and fled: **hatchment**, "not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlets, spurs, and tabard (*i.e.* a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted ..) are hung over the grave of every knight" (Sir J. Hawkins).

193. **No noble ... ostentation**, no such rites as his rank demanded, none of the funeral pomp which he might justly claim.

194, 5. **Cry, .. question**, call so loudly, as it were with his voice from heaven, that I am bound in all filial love to inquire into the circumstances and find out the meaning of them; cp. *J. C.* iv. 3. 165, "Now sit we close about this taper here And *call in question* our necessities."

196. **And where . fall**, and let the fullest vengeance fall upon him who deserves it; **axe**, as the implement used in the execution of criminals.

SCENE VI.

1. **What are they?** what manner of men? **What**, less definite than *who*.

5. **I should be greeted**, I am likely to receive a greeting.

7. **Let him**, may he.

9. **bound**, on his way for.

10. **let to know**, informed; we still say 'let me know,' *i.e.* tell me.

12. **overlooked**, read.

13. **some ... king**, some means of access to, etc.

14. **Ere we ... sea**, before we had been two days at sea.

15. **of ... appointment**, fitted out in most warlike fashion, *i.e.* heavily armed.

16. **we put on ... valour**, we made a virtue of necessity and assumed a warlike bearing.

16, 7. **in the grapple**, as we grappled, *i.e.* threw out our grappling-irons in order to hold their vessel fast to ours: **boarded**, leaped on board: **on the instant**, just as I did so.

19. **thieves of mercy**, merciful thieves; see note on i. 2. 4.

19, 20. **but they ... them**, but their mercy was due to politic reasons, for they wanted me in return to do them a service with the king.

21. **repair**, make your way; in this sense from Lat. *repatriare*, to return to one's own country.

22. **as thou**, as that with which you.

23. **will make**, *i.e.* which will make; for the omission of the relative, see Abb. § 244.

23, 4. **yet are ... matter**, yet no words would describe the matter in sufficiently strong language; the metaphor is that of shot not heavy enough for the calibre of a gun.

28. **I will .. letters**, I will give you the means, opportunity, of delivering these letters.

29. **And do 't ... me**, and do it all the more quickly that by my doing so, etc.; **the**, ablative of demonstration. see Abb. § 94.

SCENE VII.

1. **Now must .. seal**, after what you have heard, you can no longer fail to acquit me of all complicity in your father's death; for **seal**, see note on i. 2. 60.

2. **And you ... friend**, nor can you help heartily recognizing me as a friend.

3. **Sith**, see note on ii. 2. 6; **knowing**, intelligent.

5. **It well appears**, it appears plain.

6. **proceeded not**, took no action to punish: **feats**, deeds.

7. **crimeful**, full of crime, desperately criminal: **capital**, heinous.

8, 9. **As by ... up**, as by all considerations of your own safety, of what wisdom dictated, and everything else, you were so strongly prompted to do.

10. **unsinew'd**, to have no force in them.

12. **by his looks**, on his looks; on the sight of him.

13. **be ... which**, "perhaps a confusion between 'be it either' and 'be it whichever of the two.' Perhaps, however, 'either' may be taken in its original sense of 'one of the two,' so that 'either which' is 'which-one-soever of the two'" (Abb. § 273).

14. **She 's so ... soul**, my life and soul (*i.e.* I in everything) are so wrapped up in her; she is so much a part of my existence; cp. *Oth.* i. 3. 374, "Let us be *conjunctive* in our revenge against him."

16. **I could ... her**, I could not but move as she moves.

17. **Why to ... go**, why I could not have recourse to a public trial.

18. **the general gender**, the common race, the common people; cp. ii. 24. 14.

19-21. **Who, ... graces**, who seeing his offences with their own eyes (*i.e.* eyes prejudiced in his favour), would see in his fetters only further reason to love him (those fetters being regarded as an act of injustice calling for their pity). Johnson points out that the simile would have been more appropriate if the spring had changed base metals into gold; there does not appear to be an allusion to any particular spring, as Reed supposed.

21. **my arrows**, my scheme for punishing him.

22. **Too slightly ... wind**, too light to meet so strong a wind.

23, 4. **Would have ... them**, would have been blown back in my face instead of hitting the mark at which they were aimed.

25, 6. **And so ... terms**, and in this way my father has been lost to me, and my sister been driven into circumstances of desperation; for the construction, cp. i. 2. 215, iii. 3. 38. Also see Abb. § 425.

27. **if praises ... again**, if I may speak of her as she once was.

28, 9. **Stood ... perfections**, proudly challenged all modern times to produce one equal to her in her various perfections; **on mount**, where the challenge of her worth could be widely heard.

30. **Break ... that**, do not allow your sleep to be broken by the fear that you may not be able to wreak your revenge. For the plural **sleeps**, Dyce quotes Phaer's *Virgil, Æneidos*, ii., where the original Latin has the singular.

31. **That we ... dull**, that we are of so spiritless and inert a nature; **flat**, a metaphor from a liquid that has become insipid.

32, 3. **That we ... pastime**, that we can endure to have danger flaunt us in the face and treat the matter as though it were a mere joke; **our beard**, with an allusion to the insult conveyed in plucking a man by the beard; for **with**, = by, see Abb. § 193.

34. **I ... we**, in the former case speaking of himself as a man, in the latter of himself as a king.

35. **that**, *sc.* fact.

43. **High and mighty**, *i e.* one; cp. above, iii. 1. 43, "*Gracious*, so please you."

45, 6. **first ... thereunto**, first asking your gracious permission to do so.

46, 7. **my sudden ... return**, my return, the suddenness of which is only exceeded by its strangeness.

49. **should**, can possibly; see Abb. § 325.

50. **abuse**, deception.

51. **character**, handwriting.

54. **I'm lost in it**, I am completely baffled by the event.

56. **That**, to think that: **live and tell**, live to tell, as we should now say.

58. **As how ... otherwise?** and yet I know not how it can be so, or how it can be otherwise; that he should have returned in face of the measures I took, is inexplicable; and yet that he should not have returned is, in face of the letter received, equally inexplicable; the one thing is as difficult to believe as the other.

59. **ruled by me**, guided by my advice.

60. **So ... peace**, provided that your advice does not compel me to keep peace with him.

62. **As checking at**, in consequence of his rebelling against, starting back in alarm at; the metaphor is from falconry; cp. *T. N.* iii. 1. 71, "And, like a haggard, *check at* every feather."

63. **work him**, persuade him; work upon him so that he will undertake.

65. **Under ... fall**, beneath the weight of which he shall have no choice but to succumb.

66. **And for ... breathe**, and not the smallest breath of blame for his death shall ever light on us.

67. **uncharge the practice**, acquit our stratagem of any evil intention against him; **practice**, = plot, stratagem, is very frequent in Shakespeare.

69. **The rather**, all the more readily; see Abb. § 94.

70. **organ**, instrument: **It falls right**, everything conspires to that end; all things tend to a successful carrying out of our plan.

72. **And that ... hearing**, and that too when Hamlet was present; **quality**, accomplishment.

73. **your sum of parts**, all your gifts together; **parts**, in the sense of gifts, accomplishments, derives itself from the idea of a man being put together of several parts.

75. **regard**, opinion.

76. **Of ... siege**, which was lowest in rank, least worthy of respect; **siege**, meaning originally seat, came to be used of rank owing to the care that was taken to place people at table exactly according to their rank; cp. *Oth.* i. 2. 22, "I fetch my life and being From men of royal *siege*."

77. **A very ... youth**, a mere trifling ornament to youth.

78. **becomes**, is in accordance with.

79. **light ... livery**, the airy, jaunty, dress.

80, 1. **Than settled .. graveness**, than sedate old age accords with the warm clothing which concerns, is of importance to (and so is chosen with regard to) health and gravity of demeanour; for **Importing**, cp. *Oth.* i. 3. 284, "with such things else of quality and respect As doth *import* you": for **settled**, cp. *M. M.* iii. 1. 90, "*settled* visage and deliberate word"; **his sables and his weeds**, a hendiadys for his clothes formed of sables; for **weeds**, cp. *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 256, "*Weed* wide enough to wrap a fairy in."

82. **Here was**, there was at this court.

84. **can well ... horseback**, are adepts in horsemanship; for **can**, = are skilled in, cp. *Phœnix and Turtle*, 14, "And the priest in surplice white That defunctive music *can*."

85. **in 't**, *sc.* horsemanship: **grew ... seat**, sat as though riveted to his saddle.

86. **doing**, feats.

87, 8. **As had ... beast**, as he would have done if he and his animal were one in form and nature; "*as* like *an* appears to be (though it is not) used by Shakespeare for *as if* ... the 'if' is implied in the subjunctive" (Abb. § 107).

88. **topp'd my thought**, surpassed anything I had ever conceived; for **topp'd**, cp. *Lear* v. 3. 207, "To amplify too much, would make much more, And *top* extremity."

89. **in forgery ... tricks**, in conjuring up in my fancy feats of dexterity; for **forgery**, cp. *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 81; for **shapes**, = embodiments of fancy, *R. II.* ii. 2. 22, "Find *shapes* of grief, more than himself, to wail."

93. **brooch**, an ornament in former days often worn in the hat, now worn by women only at the throat; the Cl. Pr. Edd. point out that when worn in the hat, it was of course very conspicuous.

95. **make confession of you,** admitted your excellence in various exercises; **confession,** "here used because Lamond would not willingly acknowledge the superiority of Laertes over the French in the art of fighting" (Delius).

96-8. **And gave ... especially,** and gave such report of your masterly skill in the science and practice of defence, more especially when using your rapier; Laertes was reported by him as being good at *all* weapons, the broadsword, lance, etc., but as being something quite out of the common way when handling the rapier.

100. **If one ... you,** if one could be found your equal at fencing; cp. *Cymb.* ii. 1. 24, "I must go up and down like a cock that nobody can *match*"; **scrimers,** fencers; F. *escrimeur*, a fencer; probably a coinage of Shakespeare's; **their,** "we should have expected 'his,' not 'their,' but in the oratio recta Lamond might have said 'our nation' with propriety" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

101, 2. **had neither ... them,** seemed when fencing with you to have none of the power of attack, so necessary in fencing, none of the skill by which alone blows can be warded off, none of that keen sight necessary equally in offence and defence; cp. *Lear*, ii. 1. 52.

103. **Did ... envy,** so poisoned the mind of Hamlet with the envy which his report excited.

105. **to play with him,** that you might play a match with him: **to play,** expresses the result not the object of his coming.

108, 9. **Or are you ... heart?** or are you like the picture of some one in deep grief, a mere face without the heart beating beneath in unison with the look upon it? *i.e.* is your grief deeply seated and prepared to show its reality by action?

111-3. **But that . it,** but that I see, by observation of occurrences which demonstrate the fact beyond all doubt, that the spark and fire of love gradually burns low, as I know by my own experience that its growth also is a gradual one.

114, 5. **There lives ... it,** while love is burning most brightly, even then there is in it something which will sooner or later abate its fervour, just as the wick of a candle when it burns to a snuff dims its brilliance; *i.e.* even in its fullest vigour, love contains within it the principle of its own decay; the **snuff** of a candle is that portion of the wick which ceases to give forth light owing to the wax or tallow being burnt too low to reach and nourish it, and this snuff only dims the brightness of the flame.

116. **And nothing ... still,** and nothing continues for a long period at the same pitch of excellence; **still,** continually.

117, 8. **For goodness ... much,** for goodness itself, growing to a fulness, dies of its own excess. Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries, has here derived **plurisy** from the Lat. *plus*,

pluris, more, whereas it really comes from the Gk. πλευρά, a rib, *pleurisy*, as it is properly spelt, being a disease of the membrane which covers the lungs.

118, 9. **that we . would**, that which we desire to do, we ought to do while the desire is strong upon us: **this 'would,'** this desire, inclination.

122, 3. **And then ... easing**, and then this feeling of duty, without being put into action, is as hurtful to the moral nature as a sigh, drawn out of mere wantonness without there being any sufficient cause for it, is to the physical nature, though for the moment it may give relief; an allusion to the old belief that sighing draws drops of blood from the heart; cp. *M. N. D.* iii. 2. 97, "With *sighs* of love, that *costs the fresh blood dear*"; ii. *H. VI.* iii. 2. 63, "Look pale as primrose with *blood-drinking sighs*"; *R. J.* iii. 5. 58, "Dry sorrow drinks our blood."

123. **But .. ulcer**, but, to probe the ulcer to the quick, its most sensitive point; *i.e.* to go to the bottom of the matter.

124. **Hamlet comes back**, Hamlet, as we have just heard, is on his way back, and will soon be here, *i.e.* let us be prepared for his return, accept it as certain that he is returning.

127. **sanctuarize**, give refuge to, shield; criminals from early days, if they could take refuge in a sacred building, were beyond the reach of law, and when doing so were said to "take sanctuary"; cp. *R. III.* iii. 1. 28, *C. E.* v. 1. 94; the word here appears to be another of Shakespeare's coinages.

129. **Will you ... chamber**? will you do this, viz., shut yourself up in your rooms? Most modern editors follow the earlier quartos and the first folio in putting a full stop after **chamber**, in which case the meaning is 'if you are willing to do this, then,' etc. This, however, seems to me rather more peremptory language than the king would use to Laertes.

131. **put on**, instigate: **those shall**, those who shall.

132. **set .. on**, give a fresh coating of exaggerated praise to, etc.

134. **wager ... heads**, lay wagers as to which of you will win: **remiss**, careless; "a word seldom if ever used now except with reference to some particular act of negligence" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

135. **free from all contriving**, innocent of all plotting himself, and therefore unsuspicious of others.

136. **peruse**, carefully examine; cp. ii. 1. 90.

137. **with a little shuffling**, with a little trickery in the matter of choosing your foil, *i.e.* by mixing, during a pause in the combat, the foil you first use with others among which you have already placed one that has no button to its point, and then, on resuming the combat, taking that foil up.

138. **unbated**, not blunted by having a button, a round piece of leather, at its point: **a pass of practice**, "a treacherous thrust" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

139. **Requite ... father**, pay him back for the murder of your father.

141. **mountebank**, quack doctor; literally one who mounts on a bench to proclaim his nostrums.

142. **mortal**, deadly: **but dip**, if one only dips.

143. **cataplasm**, plaster, poultice: **so rare**, however rare in its effects.

144. **all simples ... virtue**, all efficacious herbs.

147. **contagion**, infectious poison: **gall**, rub the skin off any part of him.

148. **It may be death**, the result will be death.

149, 50. **Weigh ... shape**, let us consider how we may take such advantage of time and means as will best accommodate us to the form of proceeding we must adopt; the metaphor is that of getting a garment to fit the body; cp. *Cymb.* iii. 4. 195, "To some shade And *fit you to* your manhood," *i.e.* put on a dress which will suit you in playing your assumed part of a man, said to Imogen who is to disguise herself as a page.

151. **And that .. performance**, and if we should play our parts so badly that our object reveal itself; for the conjunctional affix **that**, see Abb. § 287.

153. **a back**, something in reserve to strengthen it, an inner lining as it were: **second**, something to assist (as in a duel); cp. *Cor.* i. 4. 43, "So, now the gates are ope: now prove good *seconds*"; **hold**, *sc.* firm, not give way.

154. **If this ... proof**, if this should fly to pieces when put to the proof. Before being issued for use, weapons, such as cannon, etc., are 'proved' by putting a great strain upon them, loading them with a heavier charge than will be ordinarily used; and if not well made they 'blast,' blow to pieces in the trial.

156. **I ha't**, I have it, *i.e.* I have hit upon a capital device.

157. **motion**, the lunging and retiring in making and receiving thrusts: **dry**, thirsty.

158. **As make ... end**, with which object (*sc.* that you may both become hot and thirsty) take care to let your bouts be as violent as possible; **bout**, properly a turn; then the turnings and twistings in a personal encounter, especially in fencing; Dan. *bugt*, a turn.

159. **And that**, and when; see Abb. § 284.

160. **chalice**, cup; Lat. *calix*, cup: **for the nonce**, for the

occasion; originally *for then anes*, for the once, the *n* properly belonging to the dative case, *then*, of the article, and *anes* being a genitive case used adverbially; cp. *needs*, *twice*, *i.e. twies*.

161. **stuck**, thrust; Ital. *stoccado*, or *stoccata*, a thrust.

162. **Our ... there**, our project may by this means hold good, be carried through; cp. I. 153.

166. **grows**, which grows: **aslant**, leaning over, literally *on slant*.

167. **hoar**, the under side of the leaves of the willow being silvery grey.

168. **with**, bearing: **fantastic**, fancifully made up of various flowers.

169. **crow-flowers ... purples**, "the crowflower, according to Parkinson, was called *The Fayre Mayde of France*; the 'long purples' are *dead men's fingers*, the 'daisy' imports pure virginity or spring of life"... (Farren).

170. **pendent**, hanging over the water: **her coronet weeds**, the flowers she had woven into a chaplet.

171. **Clambering ... broke**, as she was making her way along the sloping trunk in order to hang her flowers on its boughs, a branch on which her foot rested, as though resenting her action, suddenly gave way; **sliver**, a small branch, properly a slice; cp. *Macb.* iv. 1. 28, "slips of yew *Sliver'd* in the moon's eclipse"; *Lear*, iv. 2. 34.

174. **And, ... up**, and for a time they kept her afloat, like a mermaid in her natural element.

175. **Which time**, during which time, *i.e.* as long as she was borne up by her clothes; for the omission of the preposition, see Abb. § 202: **snatches**, odds and ends; such as she sang in Scene 5.

176. **As one ... distress**, as though she were insensible of the plight in which she was; for **incapable**, cp. *Cor.* iv. 6. 120, "*incapable* of help," *i.e.* not to be helped.

177, 8. **Or like ... element**, or as though she were a creature native to that element and endowed with properties suitable to existence in it; **indued**, a corruption of *endued*, in the sense of 'endow.'

179. **heavy**, literally, but with a play on the word in the sense of being overcome, made stupid, by intoxicating liquors.

180, 1. **Pull'd ... death**, put an end to her melody by dragging her down to death at the bottom of the stream.

185. **It is our trick**, it is a habit we cannot shake off; cp. *T. G.* v. 4. 1, "How use doth breed a habit in a man!"

186, 7. **When these** ..**out,** when these tears have passed away, my thoughts will then be of revenge only; for **The woman,** cp. *Macb.* iv. 3. 230, "O, I could *play the woman* with mine eyes"; *H. V.* iv. 6. 31, "And *all my mother* came into mine eyes And gave me up to tears."

188. **that** ... **blaze,** that is eager to blaze out.

189. **But** ... **it,** if it were not extinguished by these foolish tears; **doubt,** see note on i. 4. 37.

190. **How** ... **calm,** how much trouble I had in calming.

191. **will** ... **again,** will set it in motion again.

ACT V. SCENE I.

2. **salvation,** the clown's blunder for *damnation,* as in *M. A.* iii. 3. 3.

4, 5. **straight,** forthwith, without delay: **crowner,** coroner, literally merely an officer of the crown, but used specially of one appointed to hold inquests into the cause of death. Skeat says that **crowner,** which has been generally regarded as a corruption of 'coroner,' is a correct form, 'coroner' being from the base *coron-* of the M.E. verb *coronen,* to crown, with the suffix *-er,* and thus = *crown-er:* **finds** ... **burial,** decides that Christian burial may be granted, she not having committed the felony of suicide; **finds,** the technical term for the decision of the coroner; cp. *A. Y. L.* iv. 1. 101, "the foolish coroners of that age *found* it was 'Hero of Sestos.'"

9. **'se offendendo,'** another blunder of the Clown's for *se defendendo,* in self defence, "a finding of the jury in justifiable homicide" (Caldecott).

11. **three branches,** "ridicule on scholastic divisions without distinction and of distinctions without difference" (Warburton).

12. **argal,** a corruption of Lat. *ergo,* therefore.

13. **goodman,** a familiar appellation, frequent in Shakespeare, = old fellow: **delver,** digger, *i.e* grave-digger.

14. **Give me leave,** allow me to interrupt you.

16. **will he, nill he,** he goes whether his intention is to do so or not; **nill,** = ne will, not will; frequent in old English.

21. **quest,** inquest. This is supposed to be an allusion to an inquest in a case of forfeiture of a lease to the crown in consequence of the suicide by drowning of Sir John Hales, a case which Shakespeare may have heard talked about.

22. **Will** ... **on 't,** do you wish to know the whole truth of the matter? If so, I will tell you that, etc.

23, 4. **out .. burial**, *i.e.* as suicides are buried, *sc.* in the cross roads with a stake driven through the heart; cp. *M. N. D.* iii. 2. 383, "damned spirits all, That in *crossways* and floods have burial."

25. **there thou say'st**, there you tell the truth, speak to the purpose.

26. **should have ... to**, should be countenanced in drowning, etc., by being allowed Christian burial.

27. **even Christian**, fellow Christian: **Come, my spade**, come, let me take my spade, and get to my work.

28, 9. **There is . profession**, there are no gentlemen that can claim anything like old descent except gardeners, etc., and they alone still keep up the profession of the first of all ancestors, Adam.

30. **a gentleman**, one entitled to the term 'gentle,' as opposed to 'simple.'

31. **bore arms**, used in a double sense, (1) carrying arms, in Adam's case a spade, and (2) having a coat of arms, a symbol of gentle birth.

35. **arms**, again in a double sense, (1) the arms of the body, (2) implements.

36. **to the purpose**, in a rational way: **confess thyself**—an ass, he was going to add.

37. **Go to**, pooh.

38. **What is he**, what kind of person is he.

41. **tenants**, occupants; as though a man when hanged took a lease of the gallows.

42, 3. **the gallows does well**, the gallows, as you well say, do well, though not in the way you say, that of lasting a long time. Dogberry-like, he patronizingly commends his comrade's good sense in citing the gallows as doing well, but with his superior wisdom points out in what their doing well consists.

43, 4. **it does ... ill**, *sc.* by putting them out of the way.

46. **To't again, come**, make another effort to answer my question.

49. **Ay, ... unyoke**, yes, answer that, and you may then give over your work; metaphorically unharness the oxen with which he is ploughing.

51. **To 't**, go at it, let me hear you answer.

52. **Mass**, *i.e.* by the mass; see note on ii. 1. 50.

53, 4. **your dull ass**, a dull ass like you; for this colloquial use of **your**, see Abb. § 220.

56. **Yaughan**, probably the best explanation of this word, about

which there have been so many conjectures, is that suggested by Nicholson, that it was the name of an ale-house keeper in the neighbourhood of the Globe Theatre.

57. **stoup**, flagon; A.S. *steáp*, a cup.

58-61. **In youth ... meet**, the Clown's version of part of a ballad in Tottel's *Miscellany*, Arber's Reprints, p. 173.

60. **To contract ... behove**, these words probably have no meaning; the original runs "I lothe that I did love, In youth that I thought swete; As time requires for my behove Methinkes they are not mete." Jennens points out that the **oh**! and the **ah**! form no part of the song, but are "only the breath forced out by the strokes of the mattock."

61. **meet**, fitting, suitable.

62. **feeling of his business**, no sense of the sadness of the task on which he is engaged.

64. **Custom ... easiness**, from long habit, his occupation, as being his own (proper to him) has lost all unpleasant association; has made him callous to the fact of its being of a sad nature.

65, 6. **the hand ... sense**, the hand which is least employed (*i.e.* in any rough work) is always the most delicately sensitive.

69. **shipped**, carted, as we might say: **intil**, into; *to* and *til* (till) are equivalent in sense. The original runs, "For age with steyling steppes, Hath clawed me with his cowche, And lusty life away she leapes, As there had bene none such."

70. **such**, as I am; the words being made doubly ludicrous by his throwing up a skull as he utters them.

72. **jowls**, dashes; *jowl*, substantive, is the jaw, and here the idea is of the skull crashing against the ground as the jaws crash together if suddenly closed, more especially by a blow; cp. *A. W.* i. 3. 59, "they may *jowl* horns together, like any deer i' the herd."

74. **politician**, plotter, schemer; cp. *T. N.* iii. 2. 34, "I had as lief be a Brownist as a *politician*"; but as the Cl. Pr. Edd. remark, the word is always used by Shakespeare in a bad sense: **over-reaches**, used in a double sense of overtaking, getting hold of, with his spade, and of getting the better of by cunning.

79. **lord Such-a-one**, some lord or other whose name is not specified; Steevens compares *Tim.* i. 2. 216-8, "you gave Good words the other day of a bay courser I rode on: it is yours, because you liked it."

82. **my lady Worm's**, *i.e.* the property, perquisite of, etc.: **chapless**, with its jaws no longer adhering to the rest of the skull.

83. **mazzard**, a burlesque word for the head; supposed to be derived from *mazer* or *maser*, a bowl.

84. **revolution**, used in a double sense of change, and of being rolled about: **and ... see 't**, supposing we had the knack to understand it; for **and**, see Abb. § 101.

85. **cost ... breeding**, gave no more trouble to breed; for **the**, preceding a verbal, see Abb. § 93.

85, 6. **but to .. 'em**, than that they should be used for playing at loggats; the Cl. Pr. Edd., abridging a description of the game sent them by the Revd. G. Gould, say that the game resembled bowls, but with notable differences. First, it is played not on a green, but on a floor strewed with ashes. The Jack is a wheel made of some hard wood, the loggat, of which each player has three, is a truncated cone, held lightly at the thin end, and the object, as at bowls, is to pitch them so as to lie as nearly as possible to the Jack.

88. **For and**, Dyce points out that these words answer to *And eke* in the original version.

89. **for to**, see note on iii. 1. 167, above.

92. **quiddities**, "Mid. Lat. *quiditas*, the whatness or distinctive nature of a thing, brought into a by-word by the nice distinction of the schools" (Wedgwood, *Dict.*): **quillets**, frivolous distinctions; probably from Lat. *quidlibet*, what do you choose?

93. **tricks**, legal chicaneries.

94. **sconce**, properly a small fort, in which sense it is used in *H. V.* iii. 6. 76; in *C. E.* ii. 2. 37, for a helmet; and i. 2. 75, for a head, as here.

95. **of his action of battery**, of the action for battery (assault) which, if he chose, he might bring against him.

97, 8. **his statutes .. recoveries**, "A recovery with a *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common crier, or some such inferior person) being successively *vouched*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both 'fines' and 'recoveries' are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. 'Statutes' are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgment for securing debts, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. 'Statutes' and 'recognizances' are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed" (Ritson).

98. **fine of his fines**, the end of all his legal practice; all that comes of his long practising as a lawyer.

98, 9. **the recovery of his recoveries**, all that he recovers, gets in return for the recoveries in which, when alive, he was engaged:

fine dirt, Rushton (*Shakespeare as a Lawyer*, p. 10) explains **fine** here, as in l. 98, in the sense of *last*. "His fine pate is filled, not with fine dirt, but with the *last* dirt which will ever occupy it, leaving a satirical inference to be drawn, that even in his lifetime his head was filled with dirt"; but if this be the primary sense, there must also be play upon the word in its ordinary sense.

100. **vouch ... purchases**, give him no better title to his purchases, even though those vouchers were double ones.

101. **than the .. indentures**, than the mere parchment on which indentures are written. "Indentures were agreements made out in duplicate, of which each party kept one. Both were written on the same sheet, which was cut in two in a crooked or indented line (whence the name), in order that the fitting of the two parts might prove the genuineness of both in case of dispute" (Cl. Pr. Edd.). Cp. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, iv. 2. 18, 9, "prentice to a grocer in the Strand *By deed indent, of which I have one part*"; this part was called the 'counterpane.'

102. **The very ... lands**, the very title-deed by which his lands were conveyed (in a legal sense), transferred: **box**, coffin, with a reference to the boxes in which lawyers keep deeds, etc.

103. **inheritor**, possessor, owner; cp. *L. L. L.* ii. 1. 5, "To parley with the sole *inheritor* of all perfections"; *R. III.* iv. 3. 34, "Meantime, but think how I may do thee good, And be *inheritor* of thy desire."

106. **and of .. too**, accurately speaking, it is vellum that is made of calf skins, parchment of sheep or goat skins.

107, 8. **They are .. that**, those who trust to parchment are but dolts; "an 'assurance' is the legal evidence of the transfer of property" (Heard, *Shakespeare as a Lawyer*).

109. **sirrah**, sir; a term used more generally to inferiors, or with disrespect or unbecoming familiarity to superiors; occasionally applied to women.

113. **lest**, with a play upon the word in its two senses.

114. **on 't**, of it.

117. **the quick**, the living.

123. **For none, neither**, for neither the one nor the other, either.

127. **absolute**, precise, punctilious about accuracy.

127, 8. **by the card**, with precision; according to some the reference is to the mariners' chart; according to others to the card on which the points of the compass were marked; according to others again to the card and calendar of etiquette, or book of manners, of which, says Staunton, several were published in Shakespeare's time.

129. **these three years**, *i.e.* for a considerable time past.

130. **picked**, smart, spruce; cp. *K. J.* i. 1. 193, "My *picked* man of countries."

131. **kibe**, chilblain; a sore on the hands or feet due to great cold.

133. **Of all ... year**, if you wish me to be precise as to the exact day, why, etc. The Cl. Pr. Edd. quote *R. J.* i. 3. 16, "Even or odd, of all the days in the year, Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen," where the speaker is an illiterate old nurse with the same passion for being precise.

141. **it 's ... there**, it does not much matter.

143, 4. **there ... he**, here again Marston, *The Malcontent*, iii. 1. 100, 1, seems to have followed Shakespeare, "Your lordship shall ever find .. amongst an hundred Englishmen, four-score and ten madmen."

149. **Upon what ground**? owing to what cause? The clown in the next line takes **ground** in its literal sense.

154. **pocky corses**, bodies of those who have died of the small-pox.

154, 5. **will scarce .. in**, will scarcely keep from decomposition till the funeral; **you**, the colloquial dative.

166. **A pestilence ... rogue**! curses on him, as such a mad rogue deserves!

167. **Rhenish**, Rhine wine.

168. **Yorick**, said to be the German and Danish *Georg*, *Jörg*, our *George*, the English *y* representing the foreign *j*, and having the same sound.

172. **a fellow . . jest**, a fellow of inexhaustible wit.

174. **it**, "used in reference to the idea of having been borne on the back of him whose skeleton remains are thus suddenly presented to the speaker's gaze, the idea of having caressed and been fondled by one whose mouldering fleshless skull is now held in the speaker's hand" (Clarke).

175. **my gorge rises at it**, I feel sick at the very idea; the **gorge** is the throat, and the 'rising' is that feeling in the throat which accompanies the inclination to vomit.

178. **on a roar**, we should now say '*in* a roar.'

179. **quite chap-fallen**, utterly downcast, without so much as a smile on your face: **my lady's**, not a particular lady, but any one to whom the title was applicable.

180. **let her paint**, even if she should lay on the paint.

181. **favour**, appearance; used especially of the features.

185. **i' the earth**, when buried.

189. **return**, sc. in returning to the dust of which we are made.

192. **'Twere ... so**, to follow out the idea would be but idle speculation, a mere waste of ingenuity.

193, 4. **with modesty**, without any exaggeration.

196. **loam**, a mixture of clay and sand.

199. **Imperious**, imperial; though Shakespeare frequently uses **Imperious**, for imperial, he rarely, if ever, uses 'imperial' for imperious, in its modern sense of dictatorial.

202. **flaw**, sudden gust of wind.

203. **aside**, let us stand aside.

205. **such maimed rites**, such incomplete rites.

207. **Fordo**, destroy; cp. ii. 1. 103: for **it** = its, see note on i. 2. 216: **estate**, rank, position.

208. **Couch we**, let us lie close so as not to be seen; cp. *A. W.* iv. 1. 24, "But *couch*, ho! here he comes."

209. **What ceremony else?** what further ceremonies have to be performed? *i.e.* surely this does not complete the usual rites.

212, 3. **Her obsequies ... warranty**, we have gone as far in the matter of ritual observance as we have authority for doing: **her death**, the manner of her death.

214. **but that ... order**, if it were not that the king's command, which we dare not disobey, over-rules us as regards the proceedings usual in such a case.

216. **for**, in the place of.

217. **Shards**, potsherds, pieces of broken crockery.

218. **crants**, a coronet, or tire for the head; worn by maidens till they were married; a singular noun, from Ger. *krantz*. A writer in the *Ed. Rev.* for July, 1869, has shown by extracts from Weber's introduction to the ballad of *Child Axe Wold*, that "the burial of a northern maiden is still appropriately marked, as in the case of Ophelia, by the presence of her virgin crants, and maiden strewments."

219. **Her maiden strewments**, the strewing of flowers upon the bier, such
her grave
flowers Wh
thy sad grave."

219, 20. **and the ... burial**, "In these words, reference is still made to the marriage rites, which in the case of maidens are sadly parodied in the funeral rites. See *R. J.* iv. 5. 85-90. As the bride was brought home to her husband's house with bell and wedding festivity, so the dead maiden is brought to her last home with 'bell and burial'" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

221. **Must ... done?** is it forbidden to perform any further rites? In modern English the words would mean 'is it not necessary to,' etc.: **No more be done!** I have followed Staunton and Knight in putting a note of admiration after **done**, instead of a semi-colon. The priest seems to be indignantly repeating Laertes' words, with a special emphasis on **more**, not to be confirming them.

223. **To sing**, by singing; if we were to sing; the indefinite infinitive: **requiem**, a mass for the repose of the dead, so called from beginning with the words *Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine*, grant eternal peace to them, O Lord; cp. *dirge* i. 2. 12.

224. **peace-parted souls**, souls which have departed the body in peace.

226. **May violets spring!** cp. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xviii. 3, 4, "And from his ashes may be made The violet of his native land": **churlish**, in refusing her the full rites of burial.

228. **howling**, *i.e.* in the torments of hell.

230. **I hoped ... been ...** "in the Elizabethan, as in early English authors, after verbs of *hoping*, *intending*, or verbs signifying that something *ought* to *have* been done, but was not, the complete present infinitive is used" (Abb. § 360).

231. **thought**, fondly expected: **deck'd**, *sc.* with flowers.

232. **t' have**, this is the reading of the folios; the quartos omit the sign of the infinitive.

234. **thy most ingenious sense**, thy sense, that most cunningly-devised creation of God: **most** shows, I think, that **ingenious** here is to be compared rather with its literal sense in *Cymb.* iv. 2. 186, "My *ingenious* instrument!" *i.e.* of curious construction, said of his harp, rather than with *Lear*, iv. 6, 287, "how stiff is my vile sense That I stand up and have *ingenious* feeling Of my huge sorrows."

235. **Hold ... awhile**, do not yet fill up the grave.

238. **this flat**, this level surface.

239. **Pelion**, a lofty range of mountains in Thessaly. In their war with the gods, the giants are said to have attempted to heap Ossa and Olympus on Pelion, or Pelion and Ossa on Olympus, in order to scale heaven: **skyish**, reaching almost to the sky, Olympus being the loftiest of the mountains in Greece.

240. **What is he?** what manner of man is he?

241. **Bears such an emphasis**, so mighty a stress laid upon it.

241, 2. **whose phrase ... stand**, whose utterance of sorrow has such magic power over the planets as to arrest their motion; an allusion to the charms of witches who were supposed by them to be able to arrest the course of the moon and stars.

243. **wonder-wounded**, paralysed by wonder.

247. **splenitive**, given to sudden anger; the spleen was of old supposed to be the seat of anger, hatred, malice.

249. **Which ... fear**, which it will be prudent in you to fear.

252. **theme**, subject.

253. **wag**, "the word had not the grotesque signification which it now has, and might be used without incongruity in the most serious passages" ... (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

255. **forty thousand**, used for an indefinite number.

256, 7. **Could not ... sum**, could not, however great their love, vie with me in loving her.

259. **forbear him**, do not attempt to touch him, for fear of the consequences.

260. **'Swounds**, see note on ii. 2. 549: **do**, emphatic; by what *acts* are you prepared to show that love which you have professed in such boastful words?

261. **Woo 't**, according to Singer, a common contraction in the northern counties for *wouldst thou;* used, says Halliwell, in the western counties for *will thee.*

262. **eisel**, the two most probable of the many explanations given of this word are (1) vinegar, (2) the name of some river; **eisel**, or *eysell*, for vinegar, occurs in *Sonn.* cxi. 10, and was a word of no uncommon occurrence in Elizabethan literature: if it be Shakespeare's word here, **drink up** will mean 'greedily quaff.' The advocates of the name of a river cite the *Yssel* in Flanders, the *Oesil* in Denmark, and the *Weisel* or Vistula, or consider it identical with *Ousel*, the diminutive of *Ouse*, a common name of rivers in England, and signifying a river or water: **eat a crocodile**, the advocates for the name of a river claim that their view is supported by this expression, which looks as if Hamlet were challenging Laertes to impossible feats.

264. **To outface me**, to outdare me; to put me to shame by the extravagant professions of your love.

266. **prate**, rant.

268. **pate**, used in a ridiculous sense.

269. **Ossa**, see note on l. 239: **like a wart**, no bigger than a wart: **mouth**, talk big.

271. **awhile ... him**, for a time his fit of madness will exercise its power over him.

273. **golden couplets**, the dove generally sits upon two eggs, and the young birds when hatched are covered with a yellow down: **disclosed**, by the breaking of the eggs; see note on iii. 1. 166.

274. **His . . drooping**, he will hang down his head in abashed silence.

277, 8. **Let ... day**, *i.e.* nature will take her own course whatever mighty obstacles we may put in its way; it is no use my cavilling at this behaviour of Laertes; 'a dog hath his day' was a proverbial phrase meaning that every dog will at one time or another have its good time.

279. **wait upon him**, attend him to see that he does himself no injury.

280. **Strengthen . speech**, let what we talked about last night encourage you to be patient awhile; **in**, in the thought of; see Abb. § 162.

281. **We 'll put . push**, we will without delay give the matter a decisive impulse, one that will bring things to a definite issue.

283. **This ... monument**, *i.e.* Hamlet's life offered up by Laertes to his sister's memory shall be a more lasting monument in men's minds than any material one that could be built.

285 **in patience ... be**, let us act with patience and control.

SCENE II.

1. **So much . . other**, enough of this matter; now I will show you how the other turned out.

2. **the circumstance**, all the details.

4. **fighting**, struggle as to whether I should let matters take their course or should actively oppose it.

6. **Worse ... bilboes**, in a more miserable plight than that of the mutineers in chains: for **mutines**, see note on iii. 4. 83. Of the **bilboes**, Steevens says, "This is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors anciently were linked together. The word is derived from Bilboa, a place in Spain ... The bilboes are still shown in the Tower of London among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada." **Rashly,**—The sentence is continued in ll. 12, etc.

7-9. **And praised ... fail**, and I thank rashness for the impulse, —for it is well we should recognize that our sudden and apparently unwise impulses often serve us well, when our deep plots come to nothing. Malone defends *pall*, the reading of the second quarto and later folios, by quoting *A. C.* ii. 7. 88, "I 'll never follow thy *pall'd* fortunes more," but there is a great difference between fortunes palling and plots palling. Ingleby would read *fall*; the reading in the text is Pope's. In l. 7 Tyrwhitt conjectured, "And praised be rashness, for it makes us know,"—a conjecture made independently by myself, which I hesitate to adopt only because it is so easy a way out of a difficulty.

11. **Rough-hew .. will,** however clumsily we may begin to fashion them.

13. **My sea-gown ... me,** having hurriedly wrapped myself in my sea-gown. Singer quotes Cotgrave, "*Esclavine* .. a sea-gowne, or a coarse, high-collered, and short-sleeved gowne, reaching down to the mid-leg, and vsed most by sea-men and Saylors."

14. **find out them,** for the transposition of the pronoun, see Abb. § 240.

15. **Finger'd,** got hold of; put my hand upon by lucky accident.

16. **room,** cabin.

17. **My fears ... manners,** I in my fear thinking nothing as to whether I was acting honourably: **to unseal,** as to, etc., see Abb. § 281.

18. **Their grand commission,** the commission they were so proud of having entrusted to them.

20. **Larded,** garnished, tricked out; cp. *M. W.* iv. 6. 14, "The mirth whereof so *larded* with my matter."

21. **Importing, ... too,** those reasons having to do with the well-being of both the king of Denmark and the king of England; the former because Hamlet's death was so necessary to him, the latter because of the vengeance the king of England would provoke by disobeying the commands sent him; see above, iv. 3. 57-64.

22. **With, ho! . life,** mentioning the terrible dangers which threatened so long as I was allowed to live; **ho!** seems to me an exclamation of ridicule, not of horror, as Delius takes it; **bugs,** bugbears, terrors; as frequently in Shakespeare.

23. **on the supervise,** immediately upon his reading it: **no leisure bated,** without any abatement of haste in the way of leisurely proceeding; cp. below, l. 45.

24. **not to stay .. axe,** without so much as waiting till the axe could be sharpened.

27. **hear me how,** for the redundant object, see Abb. § 414.

30, 1. **Ere ... play,** before I could think the scheme out in all its completeness, my brains were already at work upon its execution; the prologue of a play necessarily involved a knowledge of its scheme, and sometimes declared what that scheme was. Some editors take **They** as referring to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz.

32. **wrote it fair,** wrote it out in a clerkly hand.

33. **hold,** consider: **statists,** statesmen; Blackstone says that most of the great men of Shakespeare's time whose autographs

have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones.

34. **A baseness**, a mark of low birth.

36. **yeoman's service**, right trusty service; the yeomen of old days were among the most serviceable of troops.

37. **effect**, purport.

38. **conjuration**, adjuration.

39. **As England . tributary**, calling upon the king of England as being a faithful, etc.

40. **As love .. flourish**, according as he desired that their mutual love should flourish, etc.; the **palm** being an evergreen and a hardy tree is used as a type of enduring freshness.

41. **As peace .. wear**, according as he wished that peace should abound between them; **wheaten garland**, wheat being symbolical of peace and plenty.

42. **And stand ... amities**, and continue to be a connecting link of friendship between the two countries. Johnson remarks, "The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction."

43. **As'es . . charge**, weighty provisos; "a quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle and *ass*, the beast of burthen" (Johnson). He also quotes Chapman's *The Widow's Tears*, 1612, "Thou must be an ass *charg'd with crowns* to make way," to show that *charge* was used for *load*.

44. **on the view . . contents**, as soon as he should have made himself master of the contents.

45. **Without .. less**, without any hesitation, consideration, however slight.

47. **Not .. allow'd**, without even allowing them to confess their sins to the priest and obtain absolution; *to shrive* is from A.S. *scrifan*, to impose a penance or compensation.

48. **even ... ordinant**, even in that particular heaven had ordained matters to the same end; the fact that I had my father's signet-ring in my purse shows it was heaven's will that things should go as they have gone.

50. **model**, counterpart, copy; **that Danish seal**, with which their commission was sealed.

51. **the writ**, the mandate.

52. **Subscribed it**, affixed an imitation of the king's signature: **impression**, *sc.* of the seal.

53. **changeling**, usually meaning a child that had been substituted by fairies or witches for one carried off by them.

56. **go to 't**, *i.e.* their destined death.

57. **they did .. employment**, their employment (which involved *my* death) was one eagerly sought by them, and therefore I need not feel any scruples in sending them to their death.

58. **They are conscience**, their fate does not trouble my conscience.

58, 9. **their defeat . grow**, their destruction is due to their having insinuated themselves into the project for killing me.

60. **the baser nature**, those of inferior courage and address.

61, 2. **Between .. opposites**, between the weapons of two mighty opponents (such as the king and myself) when they are thrusting at each other with most deadly purpose; for **opposites**, cp. *T. N.* iii. 2. 68, "And his *opposite*, the youth, bears in his visage no great presage of cruelty."

63. **Does it .. upon**, is it not imperative upon me; see Abb. § 204.

65. **Popp'd in ... hopes**, suddenly thrust himself in between me and my election to the throne, of which I had good hopes.

66, 7. **Thrown out . cozenage**, so cunningly fished for my death: **angle**, properly the fishing-rod and line, then used figuratively, as in *W. T.* iv. 2. 52, "The *angle* that plucks our son thither"; **proper**, own, my very life; for **cozenage**, see note on iii. 4. 77.

67, 8. **is 't not . . arm**? am I not perfectly justified in paying him out with my own hand?

68-70. **and is 't not ... evil**? and would it not be a sin worthy of damnation to let this plague-spot upon human nature have further opportunities for evil? for **canker**, see note on i. 3. 39; **In**, into; *for other instances, see* Abb. § 159.

71, 2. **It must . there**, the king is certain to know very soon what is the result of his commission (and therefore there is no time to be lost in doing whatever you have determined to do).

73. **It will .. mine**, the time that will elapse before he knows the result will be short; but that short interval is wholly mine, there is nothing to baulk my vengeance.

74 **And a man's .. 'One,'** and the taking of a man's life is as easy as to count one; short as the interval is, his death is but the affair of a moment.

76. **forgot myself**, allowed myself to behave with want of courtesy.

77. **image**, reflection, semblance; cp. *K. J.* iv. 2. 71, "The *image* of a wicked, heinous fault."

78. **court his favours**, endeavour to win him to forgiveness and friendship.

79. **Bravery**, extravagant display.

82. **this water-fly**, this contemptible insect; "a water fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler" (Johnson).

84. **Thy state gracious**, you are all the better for not knowing him; 'state of grace' was used in theological language for that state of a man's soul which had obtained Divine favour; cp. *M. N. D.* ii. 2. 89, "The more my prayer, the lesser is my *grace*"; *W. T.* ii. 1. 122, "this action I now go on Is for my better *grace*."

85, 6. **let a beast** . . **mess**, if a beast (like this fellow) only has plenty of property, he shall eat at the king's table; **crib**, manger, that from which stalled beasts feed; **mess**, from O. F. *mes*, a dish of meat . . that which is set or placed, viz., on the table; pp. of *mettre*, to place. — Low Lat. *mittere*, to place: Lat. *mittere*, to send" . . (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

87. **chough**, it is doubtful whether here a bird of the jackdaw genus is meant, Osric being compared to it on account of his chattering, or whether **chough** is only another spelling of **chuff**, used in i. *H. IV.* ii. 2. 94, for a wealthy but ill-mannered fellow: **spacious** ... **dirt**, possessed of many a broad acre.

88. **Sweet**, "a common mode of address in the Elizabethan court language" (Mommsen).

90. **with all spirit**, with the greatest readiness; in imitation of Osric's jargon.

90, 1. **Put** . . **head**, put your hat on your head, for which it is intended; **bonnet**, now used only for the headgear of women and Highlanders.

92. **it is very hot**, *i.e.* it is on account of the heat that I carry it in my hand.

94. **indifferent cold**, fairly, moderately, cold.

95, 6. **hot** ... **complexion**, hot, as it seems to a man of my temperament; **complexion**, was formerly used for both temperament and external appearance, as well as the colouring of the face, its only modern sense.

99. **on your head**, on you.

101. **remember** — Hamlet was probably about to add 'your courtesy,' a phrase used in bidding a man put *on* his hat, not put it off, as would be expected; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 1. 103, "I do beseech thee, *remember thy courtesy*; I beseech thee, apparel thy head." How the phrase got that meaning has not been discovered; possibly it was originally used when a man had already been bidden to 'apparel his head,' but out of humility had

hesitated to do so, being thus guilty of a want of the truest courtesy.

102. **for mine ease**, I assure you I do it because I find it more comfortable; the phrase was a common one in the ceremonious language of the period. Marston, *The Malcontent*, Ind. 37, again imitates Shakespeare; "*Condell.* I beseech you, sir, be covered. *Sly.* No, *in good faith, for mine ease.*"

103. **absolute**, perfect in all gentlemanly accomplishments.

104. **excellent differences**, according to Delius, different excellences; the Cl. Pr. Edd. explain, "distinctions marking him out from the rest of men," which seems to me more satisfactory.

104, 5. **of very ... showing**, of most refined manners and high-bred courtesy: **feelingly**, with a due appreciation of his merits.

106. **the card ... gentry**, the very guide-book of good-breeding; cp. ii. *H. VI.* iii. 1. 203. "in thy face I see The map of honour, truth and loyalty."

106, 7. **you shall . see**, you shall find him to contain in himself every accomplishment that one could wish to see: in **continent** and **part** there is a reference to geographical terms, you shall find in him the whole continent of which a gentleman may wish to see a part; with an allusion to the grand tour which in Shakespeare's day it was the custom for well-born young men to make on the continent.

108. **his definement you**, his description suffers nothing at your hands; you describe him in full and adequate terms.

109, 10. **to divide ... memory**, to specify one by one the innumerable particulars of his excellence would be an effort of arithmetic which would make memory giddy.

110, 1. **and yet but .. sail**, the only explanation of this passage that seems at all satisfactory is given by Abbott, § 128. Remarking that 'neither' for our 'either' is in Shakespeare's manner, after a negative expressed or implied, and that the ellipsis of the negative explains **neither** here, he paraphrases **but yaw neither** by "do nothing but lag clumsily behind neither." To *yaw* is properly to fall off or swerve from the course laid; and so from the vessel not being able to go straight to the point, we may get the sense of lagging behind. But it seems to me that **in respect of his quick sail** refers to **memory** (**his** = its), not to Laertes, and I would explain, 'and yet as regards its quick sailing (*i.e.* however quick memory might sail), it would not be able to keep its course after him.' It is the speed of memory which is primarily referred to, and though this infers the speed of that which it pursues, the idea is concerned more especially with the pursuer.

111. **in the ... extolment**, to praise him only according to his deserts.

112. **a soul ... article,** "one who, if virtues should be specified inventorially, would have many items in the list" (Schmidt).

112, 3. **and his .. rareness,** and the qualities with which he has been endowed so scarce and rare; Hamlet speaks as though Laertes were a vial into which the finest essences had been poured.

113, 4. **his semblable .. mirror,** his like could be seen only in a mirror of himself; cp. *Tim.* iv. 3, 22, "*His semblable*, yea, himself, Timon disdains"; and Theobald, *The Double Falsehood*, "None but himself could be his parallel."

114, 5. **and who .. more,** and anyone who should try to follow in his steps, imitate him, would be but as the shadow to the reality.

117, 8. **The concernancy .. breath,** what is the object of all this talk? Why do we waste time in so ineffectually trying to describe him whom no words can describe? For the double comparative, see Abb. § 11.

120, 1. **Is 't not ... really,** Horatio banters Osric about his evident inability to understand Hamlet by saying 'is it possible to you to *talk* in a language other than your natural one, and yet impossible for you to *understand* in that other language? You will be able to do so, if you make the effort.' This is nearly Moberly's explanation, only that he takes **in another tongue** as = on another's tongue. Johnson would read 'in *a mother* tongue'; Staunton, '*in*'s *mother* tongue.'

122. **What imports .. gentleman,** what was the object of mentioning that gentleman.

124, 5. **His purse ... spent,** his verbal exchequer is already bankrupt; all his wealth of fine words is exhausted; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 1. 39, 40, "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps."

129. **it would ... me,** it would not be any great commendation.

131-3. **I dare ... himself,** "I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality; no man can completely know another but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom" (Johnson).

134. **for his weapon,** as regards his skill in using his weapon.

134, 5. **in the .. unfellowed,** in the opinion of people generally his merit has no fellow, equal; **meed,** for merit, as conversely *merit* is used for *meed* in *R. II.* i. 3. 156, "A dearer *merit*, not so deep a maim ... Have I deserved at your highness' hands."

136. **his weapon,** the weapon he specially affects.

138. **but, well,** but never mind, go on.

140. **imponed**, staked: Dyce supposed this to be Osric's affected pronunciation of 'impawned'; more probably it is an affected coinage from Lat. *imponere*, to place upon.

141. **assigns**, belongings, accompaniments.

142. **hangers**, "under this term were comprehended four graduated straps by which the sword was attached to the girdle. See Chapman's *Iliad*, xi. 27, "The scaberd was of silver-plate, with golden *hangers* grac'd" (Steevens): **carriages**, the hangers, as he afterwards explains.

143. **dear to fancy**, artistic in their character: **very ... hilts**, thoroughly in keeping with the hilts.

144. **liberal conceit**, "elaborate design," (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

146, 7. **I knew ... done**, I knew that a commentary would be necessary before the whole description would be understood: **margent**, the only form used by Shakespeare. Furness points out that in old books explanatory comments were printed in the margin. Cp. *R. J.* i. 3. 86, "And what obscured in this fair volume lies Find written in the *margent* of his eyes."

149. **german**, akin, relative: Lat. *germanus*, fully akin, said of brothers and sisters having the same parents.

150, 1. **I would ... then**, till we take to carrying cannon at our sides, I should prefer the word 'hangers.'

156. **he shall ... hits**, he shall not hit you three times oftener than you hit him.

156, 7. **he hath ... nine**, of the various explanations offered here, that given by Moberly seems the most satisfactory; "each is to attack twelve times, going on till a hit is made: and Laertes bets that he will hit Hamlet twelve times before Hamlet can hit him nine times. That is: Hamlet has three points given him, and with these odds he trusts that he shall win."

157, 8. **and it ... answer**, and the matter might be settled at once if you would condescend to meet him in combat; cp. *T. C.* i. 3. 332, "And wake him to *the answer*, think you?"

163. **the breathing ... me**, the time at which I usually take my exercise.

164. **the gentleman willing**, if the gentleman be willing.

165. **will gain**, on the use of *will* when we should use *shall*, see Abb. § 319.

167. **re-deliver you**, return this as your answer.

168. **after ... will**, so long as you give that as my answer in effect, I do not care in what affected language you give it.

170. **I commend ... lordship**, I humbly offer my services, etc.; a complimentary form of taking leave.

171. **Yours, yours**, said impatiently, your humble servant to command.

172, 3. **there are . . turn**, there are no other tongues than his own that would serve his turn in that matter, *i.e.* in commending him.

174, 5. **This lapwing . . head**, this fellow is off on his errand to tell the king of his success in as great a hurry as the lapwing, who when hatched is said to be in such a hurry to see the world that it runs off with part of its shell adhering to it. Steevens quotes Greene's *Never Too Late*, 1616, "Are you no sooner hatched, with the lapwing, but you will run away with the shell on your head?"

176. **He did . . it**, he is such a born courtier that we may be sure that he excused himself to his mother's breast before he sucked it for the liberty he was about to take. Caldecott compares Fulwel's *Arte of Flatterie*, 1579, "Flatterie hath taken such habit in man's affections, that it is in moste men altera natura; yea, the very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dugge." For **comply**, be ceremonious, formal, cp ii. 2. 351, above.

177. **bevy**, brood, flock; the word was especially used of larks and quails; and, as Grant White observes, is a more characteristic classification of Osric, who has just been called a lapwing, than the quarto reading, *breed*.

178. **the drossy age**, this age which is the mere scum of better days.

178, 9. **got the tune . . encounter**, caught the note of the times and learnt that veneer of courtesy which is now so much admired.

179-81. **a kind . . . opinions**, a kind of frothy talk, gathered here and there, which carries them safe through even the most carefully sifted opinions, *i.e.* which makes them look like good grain even to those who most carefully sift their opinions before adopting them; **fanned** is Warburton's emendation for *fond*, which many editors retain with the sense of 'alike through the most foolish and the wisest opinions,' or 'alike through the most fondly cherished and the most choice opinions.' Nicholson conjectures *vinewed*, *i.e.* musty, mouldy. Cp. *T. C.* i. 3. 27, 8, "Distinction, with a broad and powerful *fan*, Puffing at all, *winnows* the light away."

181, 2. **and do . . . out**, and yet you have only to test them by blowing, and the bubbles burst in a moment; the figure of winnowing seems to be carried on in **blow**, while at the same time it is mixed up with that of blowing soap-bubbles.

183, 5. **commended . . . hall**, young Osric, by whom the king

sent you his message, brings back word that you are awaiting him in the hall: **to play with**, to fence with; to *play* was a technical term in fencing, and to 'play a prize' (as in *T. A.* i. 1. 399) was to contend for prizes in a competition in which degrees of Master, Provost, and Scholar, were conferred for proficiency in the art.

186. **will .. time**, wish to put off the meeting till you have had further time for practice.

187, 8. **they follow . pleasure**, my inclinations attend upon the king's will in the matter.

188. **if .. ready**, if the time seems to him a fitting one, I am ready.

189. **so able**, in as good condition for the contest.

191. **In happy time**, they come at the right moment, *i.e.* I am glad to see them; the French, *à la bonne heure*.

192. **gentle entertainment**, conciliatory manner and speech.

197. **at the odds**, with the odds that have been allowed me; see ll. 155-7.

198. **thou ... think**, you can have no idea.

201. **foolery**, a mere silly feeling: **gain-giving**, misgiving; this *gain-* in composition, as in *gainsay*, is the A.S. *gegn*, against, and thus **gain-giving** is something that gives against (in the sense in which we speak of a road, door, etc., giving in some direction), goes against the heart.

203. **obey it**, *sc.* the prompting of your heart: **forestal**, anticipate, and so prevent; see note on iii. 3. 49.

204. **repair**, coming; see note on i. 1. 57.

205. **we defy augury**, I pay no heed to presentiments.

206-8. **If it be will come**, if one's fate is to come now, there will be nothing to fear in the future; if it be not awaiting one in the future, it will come now; if it does not come now, it will come sooner or later: **the readiness is all**, everything depends upon being ready to go when death summons; cp. *Lear*, v. 2. 11.

208, 9. **since no man betimes**, since no man can carry with him to the grave anything that is his, why should we grieve at leaving it when young? Cp. i. *Timothy*, vi. 7, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out," which is part of the Burial Service in the Church of England.

210. **take .. me**, let me make friends between you by placing his hand in yours.

212. **as you are a gentleman**, as a gentleman like you should do.

213. **This presence**, all this noble company; used in this phrase of persons of high rank.

214. **punish'd**, afflicted.

216, 7. **That might .. awake**, that was calculated to exasperate your natural feelings, your instincts of honour, and your resentment of discourtesy; for **exception**, cp. *A. W.* i. 2. 40, "his honour ... knew the true minute when *Exception* bid him speak."

219. **If Hamlet .. away**, if the real Hamlet, the genuine nature of the man, be absent from himself.

221. **denies it**, abjures it as his own action.

223. **is of the faction**, is among those who are, etc.

226-9. **Let my .. brother**, let my disavowal of having intentionally done you wrong so far obtain pardon of your natural nobility of heart as to make it understand that in shooting my arrow over the house, I have by my carelessness wounded one as dear to me as a brother; **o'er the house**, as a boy might do, though nothing was farther from his thoughts than that of wounding any one about it.

229. **in nature**, so far as my natural feelings are concerned.

230, 1. **Whose motive .. revenge**, though in this case those natural feelings would strongly incite me to demand revenge.

231. **in my .. honour**, in the matter of my honour; cp. *M. V.* ii. 1. 13, "In *terms* of choice I am not solely led By nice direction of a maiden's eye," in both cases little more than a periphrasis.

232. **I stand aloof**, I hold myself at a distance from you, am not ready to accept your apology: **will no reconcilement**, refuse all reconciliation.

233. **some elder masters**, some 'past masters' in the etiquette of such matters.

234. **I have .. peace**, I receive an authoritative opinion based upon precedents in such matters, that I may make peace with you.

235. **ungored**, unwounded by the sarcasms of those who would otherwise twit me with having been glad to shirk the combat; cp. *T. C.* iii. 3. 228, "My fame is shrewdly *gored*."

235, 6. **But ... love**, but for the meantime I accept your proffer of love as being what it professes to be.

237. **wrong it**, *sc.* by doubting it: **I embrace it freely**, I readily take you at your word.

238. **And will ... play**, and will with all the openness of friendship engage with you in this brotherly combat.

240-2. **I'll be ... indeed**, I'll act as your foil, my ignorance

setting off your skill, as the darkness of night sets off the brilliancy of a star; Hamlet takes up the word **foil** and uses it in the sense of the tinsel placed under gems in rings, etc., to add to their brilliancy; in this sense from Lat. *folium*, a leaf; **Stick fiery off**, stand out with additional brilliancy from the contrast.

246. **Your grace ... side**, your grace by wagering on the weaker side has laid the odds. As the odds are laid on the better horse, etc., the king in backing the less skilful combatant may be said to have laid the odds, instead of taking them (notwithstanding that Laertes was, in order to win, to hit Hamlet twelve times to his nine), if Hamlet, who knew the terms of the wager, means that the points to be conceded by Laertes were not sufficient to put them on an equality. It is very improbable in view of the meaning in which the word is used in l. 248, and throughout, that **odds** should here refer to the greater value of the king's stake; and Ritson's calculation that the value of the six Barbary horses as compared with the rapiers, etc., was as twenty to one, must be an imaginary one.

248. **But since ... odds**, but since he is your superior in fencing we have received odds as to the number of hits in order to make the wager an equal one.

250. **have all a length**, are all of one length; for **a**, = one, see Abb. § 81.

254. **or quit, . . exchange**, or, at the third exchange of passes, should requite him by delivering a hit.

255. **ordnance**, cannon; "the same word as *ordinance*, which is the old spelling. . . It originally meant the *bore* or *size* of the cannon, and was thence transferred to the cannon itself" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

256. **drink . . breath**, drink to him as wishing him breath to last out the combat; cp. l. 272, below.

257. **an union**, "Mr. King, *Natural Hist. of Precious Stones*, says; 'As no two pearls were ever found exactly alike, this circumstance gave origin to the name "unio" (unique). But in Low Lat. "Margarita (um)," and "perla" became a generic name, "unio" being restricted to fine spherical specimens'" (Cl. Pr. Edd.).

260. **kettle**, kettledrum; see note on i. 4. 11: **speak**, give the signal.

262. **the heavens to earth**, *i.e.* by re-echoing the sound to the earth.

264. **wary**, watchful, so as to make no mistake about the hits.

265. **Judgement**, *i.e.* I call upon the umpire to decide.

267. **this pearl is thine**, "under the pretence of throwing a

'pearl' into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine" (Steevens).

271. **A touch**, a touch, but so slight as not to count for a hit.

272. **shall**, is certain to.

273. **napkin**, handkerchief; the ordinary sense of the word in those days.

278. **by and by**, presently: **dare not**, *i.e.* because it would excite him too much.

281. **And yet ... conscience**, *sc.* to do so with my poisoned rapier.

282. **dally**, are but playing with me; are not in earnest in your attempts to hit me.

284. **afeard ... me**, treat me as something too delicate, tender, to be made the mark of your skill.

286. **neither**, we should now say 'either.'

287. **Have at you now!** Laertes, now really irritated at being foiled, is determined to use all his skill.

STAGE DIRECTION. **scuffling**, how the exchange of rapiers takes place is much disputed, but that it was premeditated is seen from iv. 7. 137, 8.

287. **they are incensed**, their blood is up, and they will now, if not stopped, fight in real earnest.

288. **come again**, return to the struggle.

291. **as a ... springe**, "This bird [the woodcock] is trained to decoy other birds, and sometimes, while strutting incautiously too near the springe, it becomes itself entangled" (F. J. V., *Notes and Queries*, 8 Aug. 1874); cp. Marston, *The Malcontent*, ii. 1. 1, "He's caught. The woodcock's head is i' the noose."

292. **with**, by, as a result of.

293. **She swounds ... bleed**, she swoons, faints, at the sight of their blood.

302. **the foul practice**, my treacherous plot.

303. **Hath ... me**, cp. iii. 4. 199, 200.

311. **thy union**, the pearl you spoke of; perhaps with a play upon the word in its ordinary sense in reference to his union in death with the queen.

312. **He .. served**, the retribution that has fallen upon him is a just one.

313. **temper'd**, compounded; cp. *Cymb.* v. 5. 250.

315. **Mine ... thee**, may not the guilt of my death and my father's rest upon you!

319. **chance**, mischance.

320. **That are . act,** who have had no part in this catastrophe, but are only as dumb spectators at a play.

321, 2. **as this .. arrest,** which I have not, for this cruel serjeant, death, allows neither escape nor delay when he has once laid his hand upon your shoulder; cp. *H. V.* iv. 1. 178, "war is his *beadle*": *K. J.* ii. 1. 188, "Her injury the *beadle* to her sin"; and *Sonn.* lxxii. 1. 2.

324, 5 **report unsatisfied,** explain to those who shall blame my action what good cause I had for it: **it,** *sc.* that I will outlive you.

326. **an antique Roman,** one who, like the Romans of old, would choose death rather than a life which would be a disgrace, *i e.* in surviving so noble a friend.

330. **Things .. me,** unless the real facts are made known, my name will live behind me stained with guilt. Staunton compares *M. A.* iii. 110, "No glory *lives behind* the back of such."

332. **Absent ... awhile,** forgo for a time the joys of heaven.

336, 7. **gives . volley,** fires this salute.

338. **o'ercrows,** triumphs over; as a cock crows over a beaten antagonist.

340. **the election lights,** the choice of king will fall.

342, 3, **with the .. solicited,** together with the events, great and small, which have incited me to what I have done; cp *R. II.* i 2. 2, "Alas, the part I had in Woodstock's blood Doth more *solicit* me than your exclaims."

345. **And flights ... rest,** and may angels accompany your soul in its flight to heaven, and, etc.

348. **cease your search,** *i.e.* you need not go further, for woe and subject of wonder are present here in abundance.

349. **This ... havoc,** "this pile of corpses urges to merciless slaughter where no quarter is given". (Cl. Pr. Edd.). For **cries on,** cp. *Oth.* v. 1. 48, "whose noise is this that *cries on* murder?" *R. III.* v. 3. 231, 'Came to my tent and *cried on* victory."

350, **is toward,** is in preparation; cp. *A. C.* ii. 6. 75, "four feasts are *toward*."

351. **at a shot,** with one shot.

353. **our affairs,** the narration of what occurred in England in our embassy.

355. **To tell,** in telling.

357. **Where ... thanks?** by whom may we expect to be thanked for our trouble? **his,** *sc.* the king's.

360. **jump,** so exactly at the moment; see i. 1. 65: **bloody question,** bloody occurrences.

362. **give order**, said to one of the attendants.

363. **stage**, raised platform.

366. **carnal**, referring to the marriage of the king and queen.

367. **Of accidental .. slaughters**, *sc.* Polonius's death.

368. **Of deaths ... cause**, of deaths instigated by, and so resulting from cunning and the force of circumstances; the cunning was that which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern employed at the king's bidding to bring about Hamlet's death; the **forced cause**, the circumstances in which Hamlet was placed by that cunning, and which forced him to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their death.

369. **upshot**, conclusion: **purposes mistook**, plots clumsily executed, as in the murder of Hamlet.

370. **Fall'n .. heads**, recoiling upon their inventors.

371. **deliver**, narrate.

373. **embrace my fortune**, take upon me the accession to the throne.

374, 5. **I have .. me**, I have some rights in this kingdom which still live in the remembrance of men, and which the circumstances so favourable to my claim bid me assert; for **of memory**, cp. *Temp.* ii. 1. 233, "Who shall be *of as little memory*."

377. **And from .. more**, and the words I shall have to speak will come from him (*sc.* Hamlet) whose wish thus signified will find an echo in the voices of others.

378. **this same**, *i.e.* the placing of the bodies on the raised platform: **presently**, without delay.

379, 80. **Even .. happen**, without waiting for men's minds to grow calm, lest in the interval, while they are still excited, other calamities, due to intention or mistake, be added to the present ones.

382. **had he ... on**, had circumstances occurred to prompt him to action.

383. **To have .. royally**, to have shown himself worthy of his royal descent.

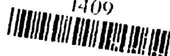
384. **rites of war**, the firing of cannon, etc.

387. **Becomes the field**, is suitable to the field of battle.

STAGE DIRECTION. *A dead march*, music such as accompanies the funeral of a soldier.

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D



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